This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

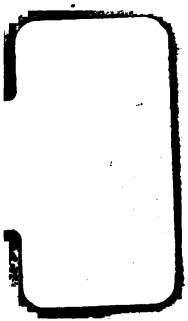
+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES
3 3433 06729911 9



(Johnson)
NCI
v. 15

THE

WORKS

OF THE

ENGLISH POETS.

WITH

PREFACES,

BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL,

BY SAMUEL JOHNSON.

VOLUME THE FIFTEENTH.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY R. HETT;

FOR C. BATHURST, J. BUCKLAND, W. STRAHAN, J. RIVINGTON AND SONS, T. DAVIES, T. PAYNE, L. DAVIS, W. OWEN, B. WHITE, S. CROWDER, T. CASLON, T. LONGMAN, B. LAW, E. AND C. DILLY, J. DODSLEY, H. BALDWIN, J. WILKIE, J. ROBSON, J. JOHNSON, T. LOWNDES, T. BECKET, G. ROBINSON, T. CADELL, W. DAVIS, J. NICHOLS, F. NEWBERY, T. EVANS, J. RIDLEY, R. BALDWIN, G. NICOL, LEIGH AND SOTHEBY, J. BEW, N. CONANT, J. MURRAY, W. FOX, J. BOWEN.

MDCC LXXIX.

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
388234A
ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS
R 1928 L

THE

POEMS

OF

DRYDEN.

VOLUME III.

28 X 82

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
388234A
ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS
R 1928 L

THE

POEMS

OF

DRYDEN.

VOLUME III.

92 X 426

TO

His Grace the DUKE of ORMOND.

MY LORD, Anno 1699.

SOME eſtates are held in England, by paying a fine at the change of every lord: I have enjoyed the patronage of your family, from the time of your excellent grandfather to this preſent day. I have dedicated the tranſlation of the lives of Plutarch to the firſt Duke; and have celebrated the memory of your heroic father. Though I am very ſhort of the age of Neſtor, yet I have lived to a third generation of your houſe; and by your Grace's favour am admitted ſtill to hold from you by the ſame tenure.

I am not vain enough to boaſt that I have deſerved the value of ſo illuſtrious a line; but my fortune is the greater, that for three deſcents they have been pleaſed to diſtinguiſh my poems from thoſe of other men; and have accordingly made me their peculiar care. May it be permitted me to ſay, That as your grandfather and father were cheriſhed and adorned with honours by two ſucceſſive monarchs, ſo I have been eſteemed and patronized by the grandfather, the father, and the ſon, deſcended from one of the moſt antient, moſt conſpicuous, and moſt deſerving families in Europe.

It is true, that by delaying the payment of my laſt fine, when it was due by your Grace's acceſſion to the

Gold, as it is the pureſt, ſo it is the ſofeſt, and moſt ductile of all metals: iron, which is the hardeſt, gathers ruſt, corrodes itſelf; and is therefore ſubject to corruption: it was never intended for coins and medals, or to bear faces and the inſcriptions of the great. Indeed it is fit for armour, to bear off inſults, and preſerve the wearer in the day of battle: but the danger once repelled, it is laid aſide by the brave, as a garment too rough for civil converſation: a neceſſary guard in war, but too harſh and cumberſome in peace, and which keeps off the embraces of a more humane life.

For this reaſon, my lord, though you have courage in an heroical degree, yet I aſcribe it to you, but as your ſecond attribute: mercy, beneficence, and compaſſion, claim precedence, as they are firſt in the divine nature. An intrepid courage, which is inherent in your Grace, is at beſt but a holiday kind of virtue, to be ſeldom exerciſed, and never but in caſes of neceſſity: affability, mildneſs, tenderneſs, and a word, which I would fain bring back to its orignal ſignification of virtue, I mean Good-nature, are of daily uſe: they are the bread of mankind, and ſtaff of life: neither ſighs, nor tears, nor groans, nor curſes of the vanquiſhed, follow acts of compaſſion, and of charity: but a ſincere pleaſure and ſerenity of mind, in him who performs an action of mercy, which cannot ſuffer the misfortunes of another, without redreſs; leſt they ſhould bring a kind of contagion along with them, and pollute the happineſs which he enjoys.

Yet ſince the perverſe tempers of mankind, ſince oppreſſion on one ſide, and ambition on the other, are ſometimes the unavoidable occaſions of war; that courage, that magnanimity, and reſolution, which is born with you, cannot be too much commended: and here it grieves me that I am ſcanted in the pleaſure of dwelling on many of your actions: but αἰδέομαι Τρῶας; is an expreſſion which Tully often uſed, when he would do what he dares not, and fears the cenſure of the Romans.

I have ſometimes been forced to amplify on others; but here, where the ſubject is ſo fruitful that the harveſt overcomes the reaper, I am ſhortened by my chain, and can only ſee what is forbidden me to reach: ſince it is not permitted me to commend you according to the extent of my wiſhes, and much leſs is it in my power to make my commendations equal to your merits. Yet, in this frugality of your praiſes, there are ſome things which I cannot omit, without detracting from your character. You have ſo formed your own education as enables you to pay the debt you owe your country; or, more properly ſpeaking, both your countries: becauſe you were born, I may almoſt ſay in purple, at the caſtle of Dublin, when your grandfather was lord-lieutenant, and have ſince been bred in the court of England.

If this addreſs had been in verſe, I might have called you, as Claudian calls Mercury, "Numen commune, "genitio faciens commercia mundo." The better to ſatisfy this double obligation, you have early cultivated

the genius your have to arms, that when the ſervice of Britain or Ireland ſhall require your courage and your conduct, you may exert them both to the benefit of either country. You began in the cabinet what you afterwards practiſed in the camp; and thus both Lucullus and Cæſar (to omit a crowd of ſhining Romans) formed themſelves to war by the ſtudy of hiſtory, and by the examples of the greateſt captains, both of Greece and Italy, before their time. I name thoſe two commanders in particular, becauſe they were better read in chronicle than any of the Roman leaders; and that Lucullus in particular, having only the theory of war from books, was thought fit, without practice, to be ſent into the field, againſt the moſt formidable enemy of Rome. Tully indeed was called the learned conſul in deriſion; but then he was not born a ſoldier: his head was turned another way: when he read the Tacticks, he was thinking on the bar, which was his field of battle. The knowledge of warfare is thrown away on a general who dares not make uſe of what he knows. I commend it only in a man of courage and reſolution; in him it will direct his martial ſpirit; and teach him the way to the beſt victories, which are thoſe that are leaſt bloody, and which, though atchieved by the hand, are managed by the head. Science diſtinguiſhes a man of honour from one of thoſe athletic brutes whom undeſervedly we call heroes. Curſed be the poet, who firſt honoured with that name a meer Ajax, a man-killing ideot. The Ulyſſes of Ovid upbraids his ignorance, that he underſtood not the ſhield

for

for which he pleaded: there were engraven on it, plans of cities, and maps of countries, which Ajax could not comprehend, but looked on them as ſtupidly as his fellow-beaſt the lion. But, on the other ſide, your Grace has given yourſelf the education of his rival: you have ſtudied every ſpot of ground in Flanders, which for theſe ten years paſt has been the ſcene of battles and of ſieges. No wonder if you performed your part with ſuch applauſe on a theatre which you underſtood ſo well.

If I deſigned this for a poetical encomium, it were eaſy to enlarge on ſo copious a ſubject; but, confining myſelf to the ſeverity of truth, and to what is becoming me to ſay, I muſt not only paſs over many inſtances of your military ſkill, but alſo thoſe of your aſſiduous diligence in the war: and of your perſonal bravery, attended with an ardent thirſt of honour; a long train of generoſity; profuſeneſs of doing good; a ſoul unſatisfied with all it has done; and an unextinguiſhed deſire of doing more. But all this is matter for your own hiſtorians; I am, as Virgil ſays, "Spatiis excluſus iniquis."

Yet, not to be wholly ſilent of all your charities, I muſt ſtay a little on one action, which preferred the relief of others to the conſideration of yourſelf. When, in the battle of Landen, your heat of courage (a fault only pardonable to your youth) had tranſported you ſo far before your friends, that they were unable to follow, much leſs to ſuccour you; when you were not only dangerouſly, but in all appearance mortally wounded,

ed, when in that deſperate condition you were made priſoner, and carried to Namur, at that time in poſſeſſion of the French; then it was, my lord, that you took a conſiderable part of what was remitted to you of your own revenues, and as a memorable inſtance of your heroic charity, put it into the hands of count Guiſcard, who was governor of the place, to be diſtributed among your fellow-priſoners. The French commander, charmed with the greatneſs of your ſoul, accordingly conſigned it to the uſe for which it was intended by the donor: by which means the lives of ſo many miſerable men were ſaved, and a comfortable proviſion made for their ſubſiſtence, who had otherwiſe periſhed, had not you been the companion of their misfortune: or rather ſent by Providence, like another Joſeph, to keep out famine from invading thoſe whom in humility you called your brethren. How happy was it for thoſe poor creatures, that your Grace was made their fellow-ſufferer! and how glorious for you, that you choſe to want, rather than not relieve the wants of others! The heathen poet, in commending the charity of Dido to the Trojans, ſpoke like a chriſtian; "Non ignara mali, miſeris ſuccurrere diſco." All men, even thoſe of a different intereſt, and contrary principles, muſt praiſe this action, as the moſt eminent for piety, not only in this degenerate age, but almoſt in any of the former; when men were made "de meliore luto;" when examples of charity were frequent, and when they were in being, "Teucri pulcherrima proles, magnanimi heroes nati melioribus annis." No envy can

detract

detract from this: it will ſhine in hiſtory; and, like ſwans, grow whiter the longer it endures: and the name of ORMOND will be more celebrated in his captivity, than in his greateſt triumphs.

But all actions of your grace are of a piece; as waters keep the tenor of their fountains: your compaſſion is general, and has the ſame effect as well on enemies as friends. It is ſo much in your nature to do good, that your life is but one continued act of placing benefits on many, as the ſun is always carrying his light to ſome part or other of the world: and were it not that your reaſon guides you where to give, I might almoſt ſay that you could not help beſtowing more, than is conſiſting with the fortune of a private man, or with the will of any but an Alexander.

What wonder is it then, that, being born for a bleſſing to mankind, your ſuppoſed death in that engagement was ſo generally lamented through the nation! The concernment for it was as univerſal as the loſs: and though the gratitude might be counterfeit in ſome, yet the tears of all were real: where every man deplored his private part in that calamity, and even thoſe, who had not taſted of your favours, yet built ſo much on the fame of your beneficence, that they bemoaned the loſs of their expectations.

This brought the untimely death of your great father into freſh remembrance; as if the ſame decree had paſſed on two, ſhort ſucceſſive generations of the virtuous; and I repeated to myſelf the ſame verſes, which I had formerly applied to him: "Oſtendunt terris hunc tantùm fata,

fata, nec ultrà eſſe ſinunt." But to the joy not only of all good men, but of mankind in general, the unhappy omen took not place. You are ſtill living to enjoy the bleſſings and applauſe of all the good you have performed, the prayers of multitudes whom you have obliged, for your long proſperity; and that your power of doing generous and charitable actions may be as extended as your will; which is by none more zealouſly deſired than by

Your GRACE's

Moſt humble,

Moſt obliged, and

Moſt obedient ſervant,

JOHN DRYDEN.

PRE-

PREFACE prefixed to the FABLES.

IT is with a poet as with a man who deſigns to build, and is very exact, as he ſuppoſes, in caſting up the coſt beforehand; but, generally ſpeaking, he is miſtaken in his account, and reckons ſhort in the expence he firſt intended: he alters his mind as the work proceeds, and will have this or that convenience more, of which he had not thought when he began. So has it happened to me: I have built a houſe, where I intended but a lodge: yet with better ſucceſs than a certain nobleman, who, beginning with a dog-kennel, never lived to finiſh the palace he had contrived.

From tranſlating the firſt of Homer's Iliads (which I intended as an eſſay to the whole work) I proceeded to the tranſlation of the twelfth book of Ovid's Metamorphoſes, becauſe it contains, among other things, the cauſes, the beginning, and ending of the Trojan war: here I ought in reaſon to have ſtopped; but the ſpeeches of Ajax and Ulyſſes lying next in my way, I could not balk them. When I had compaſſed them, I was ſo taken with the former part of the fifteenth book (which is the maſter-piece of the whole Metamorphoſes), that I enjoined myſelf the pleaſing taſk of rendering it into Engliſh. And now I found, by the number of my verſes, that they began to ſwell into a little volume; which

which gave me an occaſion of looking backward on ſome beauties of my author, in his former books: there occurred to me the hunting of the boar, Cinyras and Myrrha, the good-natured ſtory of Baucis and Philemon, with the reſt, which I hope I have tranſlated cloſely enough, and given them the ſame turn of verſe which they had in the original; and this, I may ſay without vanity, is not the talent of every poet: he who has arrived the neareſt to it, is the ingenious and learned Sandys, the beſt verſifier of the former age; if I may properly call it by that name which was the former part of this concluding century. For Spenſer and Fairfax both flouriſhed in the reign of queen Elizabeth; great maſters in our language; and who ſaw much farther into the beauties of our numbers, than thoſe who immediately followed them. Milton was the poetical ſon of Spenſer, and Mr. Waller of Fairfax; for we have our lineal deſcents and clans, as well as other families: Spenſer more than once inſinuates, that the ſoul of Chaucer was transfuſed into his body; and that he was begotten by him two hundred years after his deceaſe. Milton has acknowledged to me, that Spenſer was his original; and many beſides myſelf have heard our famous Waller own, that he derived the harmony of his numbers from the Godfrey of Bulloign, which was turned into Engliſh by Mr. Fairfax. But to return: having done with Ovid for this time, it came into my mind, that our old Engliſh poet Chaucer in many things reſembled him, and that with no diſadvantage on

the

the ſide of the modern author, as I ſhall endeavour to prove when I compare them: and as I am, and always have been, ſtudious to promote the honour of my native country, ſo I ſoon reſolved to put their merits to the trial, by turning ſome of the Canterbury tales into our language, as it is now refined; for by this means both the poets being ſet in the ſame light, and dreſſed in the ſame Engliſh habit, ſtory to be compared with ſtory, a certain judgment may be made betwixt them, by the reader, without obtruding my opinion on him: or if I ſeem partial to my countryman, and predeceſſor in the laurel, the friends of antiquity are not few: and beſides many of the learned, Ovid has almoſt all the beaux, and the whole fair ſex, his declared patrons. Perhaps I have aſſumed ſomewhat more to myſelf than they allow me: becauſe I have adventured to ſum up the evidence: but the readers are the jury; and their privilege remains entire to decide according to the merits of the cauſe, or if they pleaſe, to bring it to another hearing, before ſome other court. In the mean time, to follow the thread of my diſcourſe (as thoughts, according to Mr. Hobbes, have always ſome connexion) ſo from Chaucer I was led to think on Boccace, who was not only his contemporary, but alſo purſued the ſame ſtudies; wrote novels in proſe, and many works in verſe; particularly is ſaid to have invented the octave rhyme, or ſtanza of eight lines, which ever ſince has been maintained by the practice of all Italian writers, who are, or at leaſt aſſume the title of, Heroic Poets: he and Chaucer, among

other

other things, had this in common, that they refined their mother tongues; but with this difference, that Dante had begun to file their language, at leaſt in verſe, before the time of Boccace, who likewiſe received no little help from his maſter Petrarch. But the reformation of their proſe was wholly owing to Boccace himſelf, who is yet the ſtandard of purity in the Italian tongue; though many of his phraſes are become obſolete, as in proceſs of time it muſt needs happen. Chaucer (as you have formerly been told by our learned Mr. Rymer) firſt adorned and amplified our barren tongue from the Provencall, which was then the moſt poliſhed of all the modern languages; but this ſubject has been copiouſly treated by that great critic, who deſerves no little commendation from us his countrymen. For theſe reaſons of time, and reſemblance of genius in Chaucer and Boccace, I reſolved to join them in my preſent work; to which I have added ſome original papers of my own; which whether they are equal or inferior to my other poems, an author is the moſt improper judge; and therefore I leave them wholly to the mercy of the reader. I will hope the beſt, that they will not be condemned; but if they ſhould; I have the excuſe of an old gentleman, who, mounting on horſeback before ſome ladies, when I was preſent, got up ſomewhat heavily, but deſired of the fair ſpectators, that they would count fourſcore and eight before they judged him. By the mercy of God, I am already come within twenty years of his number, a cripple in my limbs; but what decays

are

are in my mind, the reader muſt determine. I think myſelf as vigorous as ever in the faculties of my ſoul, excepting only my memory, which is not impaired to any great degree; and if I loſe not more of it, I have no great reaſon to complain. What judgment I had, increaſes rather than diminiſhes; and thoughts, ſuch as they are, come crowding in ſo faſt upon me, that my only difficulty is to chuſe or to reject; to run them into verſe, or to give them the other harmony of proſe. I have ſo long ſtudied and practiſed both, that they are grown into a habit, and become familiar to me. In ſhort, though I may lawfully plead ſome part of the old gentleman's excuſe; yet I will reſerve it till I think I have greater need, and aſk no grains of allowance for the faults of this my preſent work, but thoſe which are given of courſe to human frailty. I will not trouble my reader with the ſhortneſs of time in which I writ it, or the ſeveral intervals of ſickneſs: they who think too well of their own performances, are apt to boaſt in their prefaces how little time their works have coſt them; and what other buſineſs of more importance interfered; but the reader will be as apt to aſk the queſtion, why they allowed not a longer time to make their works more perfect? and why they had ſo deſpicable an opinion of their judges, as to thruſt their indigeſted ſtuff upon them, as if they deſerved no better?

With this account of my preſent undertaking, I conclude the firſt part of this diſcourſe: in the ſecond part, as at a ſecond ſitting, though I alter not the draught, I muſt touch the ſame features over again, and change the

dead colouring of the whole. In general I will only ſay, that I have written nothing which favours of immorality or profaneneſs; at leaſt, I am not conſcious to myſelf of any ſuch intention. If there happen to be found an irreverent expreſſion, or a thought too wanton, they are crept into my verſes through my inadvertency; if the ſearchers find any in the cargo, let them be ſtaved or forfeited, like contraband goods; at leaſt, let their authors be anſwerable for them, as being but imported merchandiſe, and not of my own manufacture. On the other ſide, I have endeavoured to chooſe ſuch fables, both ancient and modern, as contain in each of them ſome inſtructive moral, which I could prove by induction, but the way is tedious; and they leap foremoſt into ſight, without the reader's trouble of looking after them. I wiſh I could affirm with a ſafe conſcience, that I had taken the ſame care in all my former writings; for it muſt be owned, that ſuppoſing verſes are never ſo beautiful or pleaſing, yet if they contain any thing which ſhocks religion, or good-manners, they are at beſt, what Horace ſays of good numbers without good ſenſe, "Verſus inopes rerum, nugæque "canoræ." Thus far, I hope, I am right in court, without renouncing my other right of ſelf-defence, where I have been wrongfully accuſed, and my ſenſe wire-drawn into blaſphemy or bawdry, as it has often been by a religious lawyer, in a late pleading againſt the ſtage; in which he mixes truth with falſehood, and has not forgotten the old rule of calumniating ſtrongly, that ſomething may remain.

I reſume

I resume the thread of my discourse with the first of my translation, which was the first Iliad of Homer. If it shall please God to give me longer life, and moderate health, my intentions are to translate the whole Ilias; provided still that I meet with those encouragements from the public, which may enable me to proceed in my undertaking with some chearfulness. And this I dare assure the world before-hand, that I have found, by trial, Homer a more pleasing task than Virgil (though I say not the translation will be less laborious); for the Grecian is more according to my genius, than the Latin poet. In the works of the two authors we may read their manners, and natural inclinations, which are wholly different. Virgil was of a quiet, sedate temper; Homer was violent, impetuous, and full of fire. The chief talent of Virgil was propriety of thoughts, and ornament of words: Homer was rapid in his thoughts, and took all the liberties, both of numbers and of expressions, which his language, and the age in which he lived, allowed him: Homer's invention was more copious, Virgil's more confined: so that if Homer had not led the way, it was not in Virgil to have begun heroic poetry: for nothing can be more evident, than that the Roman poem is but the second part of the Ilias; a continuation of the same story: and the persons already formed: the manners of Æneas are those of Hector superadded to those which Homer gave him. The Adventures of Ulysses in the Odysseis are imitated in the first Six Books of Virgil's Æneis: and though the accidents are not the same (which

would have argued him of a ſervile copying, and total barrenneſs of invention) yet the ſeas were the ſame, in which both the heroes wandered; and Dido cannot be denied to be the poetical daughter of Calypſo. The ſix latter books of Virgil's poem are the four and twenty Iliads contracted: a quarrel occaſioned by a lady, a ſingle combat, battles fought, and a town beſieged. I ſay not this in derogation to Virgil, neither do I contradict any thing which I have formerly ſaid in his juſt praiſe: for his Epiſodes are almoſt wholly of his own invention; and the form, which he has given to the telling, makes the tale his own, even though the original ſtory had been the ſame. But this proves, however, that Homer taught Virgil to deſign: and if invention be the firſt virtue of an Epic poet, then the Latin poem can only be allowed the ſecond place. Mr Hobbes, in the preface to his own bald tranſlation of the Ilias, (ſtudying poetry as he did mathematicks, when it was too late) Mr Hobbes, I ſay, begins the praiſe of Homer where he ſhould have ended it. He tells us, that the firſt beauty of an Epic poem conſiſts in diction, that is, in the choice of words, and harmony of numbers: now, the words are the colouring of the work, which in the order of nature is laſt to be conſidered. The deſign, the diſpoſition, the manners, and the thoughts, are all before it: where any of thoſe are wanting or imperfect, ſo much wants or is imperfect in the imitation of human life; which is in the very definition of a poem. Words indeed, like glaring colours, are the firſt beauties that ariſe, and ſtrike the ſight: but if the draught be falſe or lame, the figures ill-diſ-

poſed,

poſed, the manners obſcure or inconſiſtent, or the thoughts unnatural, then the fineſt colours are but daubing, and the piece is a beautiful monſter at the beſt. Neither Virgil nor Homer were deficient in any of the former beauties; but in this laſt, which is expreſſion, the Roman poet is at leaſt equal to the Grecian, as I have ſaid elſewhere; ſupplying the poverty of his language by his muſical ear, and by his diligence. But to return: our two great poets, being ſo different in their tempers, one choleric and ſanguine, the other phlegmatic and melancholic; that which makes them excel in their ſeveral ways, is, that each of them has followed his own natural inclination, as well in forming the deſign, as in the execution of it. The very heroes ſhew their authors; Achilles is hot, impatient, revengeful, "Impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, "acer, &c." Æneas patient, conſiderate, careful of his people, and merciful to his enemies: ever ſubmiſſive to the will of heaven, "quo fata trahunt, retrahuntque, "ſequamur." I could pleaſe myſelf with enlarging on this ſubject, but I am forced to defer it to a fitter time. From all I have ſaid, I will only draw this inference, that the action of Homer being more full of vigour than that of Virgil, according to the temper of the writer, is of conſequence more pleaſing to the reader. One warms you by degrees; the other ſets you on fire all at once, and never intermits his heat. It is the ſame difference which Longinus makes betwixt the effects of eloquence in Demoſthenes and Tully. One perſuades; the other commands. You never cool while you read

Homer, even not in the ſecond book (a graceful flattery to his countrymen); but he haſtens from the ſhips, and concludes not that book till he has made you an amends by the violent playing of a new machine. From thence he hurries on his action with variety of events, and ends it in leſs compaſs than two months. This vehemence of his, I confeſs, is more ſuitable to my temper; and therefore I have tranſlated his firſt book with greater pleaſure than any part of Virgil: but it was not a pleaſure without pains: the continual agitations of the ſpirits muſt needs be a weakening of any conſtitution, eſpecially in age; and many pauſes are required for refreſhment betwixt the heats; the Iliad of itſelf being a third part longer than all Virgil's works together.

This is what I thought needful in this place to ſay of Homer. I proceed to Ovid and Chaucer; conſidering the former only in relation to the latter. With Ovid ended the golden age of the Roman tongue: from Chaucer the purity of the Engliſh tongue began. The manners of the poets were not unlike; both of them were well-bred, well-natured, amorous, and libertine, at leaſt in their writings, it may be alſo, in their lives. Their ſtudies were the ſame, philoſophy and philology. Both of them were known in aſtronomy, of which Ovid's books of the Roman feaſts, and Chaucer's treatiſe of the Aſtrolabe, are ſufficient witneſſes. But Chaucer was likewiſe an aſtrologer, as were Virgil, Horace, Perſius, and Manilius. Both writ with wonderful facility and clearneſs; neither were great inventors;

tors: for Ovid only copied the Grecian fables; and moſt of Chaucer's ſtories were taken from his Italian contemporaries, or their predeceſſors. Boccace's Decameron was firſt publiſhed; and from thence our Engliſhman has borrowed many of his Canterbury tales: yet that of Palamon and Arcite was written in all probability by ſome Italian wit, in a former age; as I ſhall prove hereafter: the tale of Grizild was the invention of Petrarch; by him ſent to Boccace; from whom it came to Chaucer: Troilus and Creſſida was alſo written by a Lombard author; but much amplified by our Engliſh tranſlator, as well as beautified; the genius of our countrymen in general being rather to improve an invention, than to invent themſelves; as is evident not only in our poetry, but in many of our manufactures. I find I have anticipated already, and taken up from Boccace before I come to him: but there is ſo much leſs behind; and I am of the temper of moſt kings, who love to be in debt; are all for preſent money, no matter how they pay it afterwards: beſides, the nature of a preface is rambling; never wholly out of the way, nor in it. This I have learned from the practice of honeſt Montaigne, and return at my pleaſure to Ovid and Chaucer, of whom I have little more to ſay. Both of them built on the inventions of other men; yet ſince Chaucer had ſomething of his own, as The Wife of Bath's Tale, The Cock and the Fox, which I have tranſlated, and ſome others, I may juſtly give our countryman the precedence in that part; ſince I can remember nothing of Ovid which was wholly his.

Both of them underſtood the manners, under which name I comprehend the paſſions, and, in a larger ſenſe, the deſcriptions of perſons, and their very habits: for an example, I ſee Baucis and Philemon as perfectly before me, as if ſome ancient painter had drawn them; and all the pilgrims in the Canterbury tales, their humours, their features, and the very dreſs, as diſtinctly as if I had ſupped with them at the Tabard in Southwark: yet even there too the figures in Chaucer are much more lively, and ſet in a better light: which though I have not time to prove; yet I appeal to the reader, and am ſure he will clear me from partiality. The thoughts and words remain to be conſidered in the compariſon of the two poets; and I have ſaved myſelf one half of that labour, by owning that Ovid lived when the Roman tongue was in its meridian; Chaucer, in the dawning of our language: therefore that part of the compariſon ſtands not on an equal foot, any more than the diction of Ennius and Ovid; or of Chaucer and our preſent Engliſh. The words are given up as a poſt not to be defended in our poet, becauſe he wanted the modern art of fortifying. The thoughts remain to be conſidered: and they are to be meaſured only by their propriety; that is, as they flow more or leſs naturally from the perſons deſcribed, on ſuch and ſuch occaſions. The vulgar judges, which are nine parts in ten of all nations, who call conceits and jingles wit, who ſee Ovid full of them, and Chaucer altogether without them, will think me little leſs than mad, for preferring the Engliſhman to the Roman: yet, with

their leave, I muſt preſume to ſay, that the things they admire, are not only glittering trifles, and ſo far from being witty, that in a ſerious poem they are nauſeous, becauſe they are unnatural. Would any man, who is ready to die for love, deſcribe his paſſion like Narciſſus? Would he think of "inopem me copia fecit," and a dozen more of ſuch expreſſions, poured on the neck of one another, and ſignifying all the ſame thing? If this were wit, was this a time to be witty, when the poor wretch was in the agony of death? This is juſt John Littlewit in Bartholemew Fair, who had a conceit (as he tells you) left him in his miſery; a miſerable conceit. On theſe occaſions the poet ſhould endeavour to raiſe pity: but, inſtead of this, Ovid is tickling you to laugh. Virgil never made uſe of ſuch machines, when he was moving you to commiſerate the death of Dido: he would not deſtroy what he was building. Chaucer makes Arcite violent in his love, and unjuſt in the purſuit of it: yet when he came to die, he made him think more reaſonably: he repents not of his love, for that had altered his character; but acknowledges the injuſtice of his proceedings, and reſigns Emilia to Palamon. What would Ovid have done on this occaſion? He would certainly have made Arcite witty on his death-bed. He had complained he was farther off from poſſeſſion, by being ſo near, and a thouſand ſuch boyiſms, which Chaucer rejected as below the dignity of the ſubject. They, who think otherwiſe, would by the ſame reaſon prefer Lucan and Ovid to Homer and Virgil, and Martial to all four of them. As for the

turn

turn of words, in which Ovid particularly excels all poets; they are ſometimes a fault, and ſometimes a beauty, as they are uſed properly or improperly; but in ſtrong paſſions always to be ſhunned, becauſe paſſions are ſerious, and will admit no playing. The French have a high value for them; and I confeſs, they are often what they call delicate, when they are introduced with judgment; but Chaucer writ with more ſimplicity, and followed nature more cloſely, than to uſe them. I have thus far, to the beſt of my knowledge, been an upright judge betwixt the parties in competition, not meddling with the deſign nor the diſpoſition of it; becauſe the deſign was not their own; and in the diſpoſing of it they were equal. It remains that I ſay ſomewhat of Chaucer in particular.

In the firſt place, as he is the father of Engliſh poetry, ſo I hold him in the ſame degree of veneration as the Grecians held Homer, or the Romans Virgil: he is a perpetual fountain of good ſenſe; learned in all ſciences; and therefore ſpeaks properly on all ſubjects: as he knew what to ſay, ſo he knows alſo when to leave off; a continence which is practiſed by few writers, and ſcarcely by any of the ancients, excepting Virgil and Horace. One of our late great poets is ſunk in his reputation, becauſe he could never forgive any conceit which came in his way; but ſwept like a drag-net, great and ſmall. There was plenty enough, but the diſhes were ill-ſorted; whole pyramids of ſweet-meats, for boys and women; but little of ſolid meat, for men: all this proceeded not from any want of knowledge, but

but of judgment; neither did he want that in diſcerning the beauties and faults of other poets; but only indulged himſelf in the luxury of writing; and perhaps knew it was a fault, but hoped the reader would not find it. For this reaſon, though he muſt always be thought a great poet, he is no longer eſteemed a good writer: and for ten impreſſions, which his works have had in ſo many ſucceſſive years, yet at preſent a hundred books are ſcarcely purchaſed once a twelvemonth: for, as my laſt lord Rocheſter ſaid, though ſomewhat profanely, Not being of God, he could not ſtand.

Chaucer followed nature every where; but was never ſo bold to go beyond her: and there is a great difference of being Poeta and nimis Poeta, if we believe Catullus, as much as betwixt a modeſt behaviour and affectation. The verſe of Chaucer, I confeſs, is not harmonious to us; but it is like the eloquence of one whom Tacitus commends, it was "auribus iſtius temporis accommodata:" they who lived with him, and ſome time after him, thought it muſical; and it continues ſo even in our judgment, if compared with the numbers of Lidgate and Gower, his contemporaries: there is the rude ſweetneſs of a Scotch tune in it, which is natural and pleaſing, though not perfect. It is true, I cannot go ſo far as he who publiſhed the laſt edition of him; for he would make us believe the fault is in our ears, and that there were really ten ſyllables in a verſe where we find but nine: but this opinion is not worth confuting; it is ſo groſs and obvious an error, that common ſenſe (which is a rule in every thing but matters of faith and

and revelation) muſt convince the reader, that equality of numbers in every verſe, which we call Heroic, was either not known, or not always practiſed in Chaucer's age. It were an eaſy matter to produce ſome thouſands of his verſes, which are lame for want of half a foot, and ſometimes a whole one, and which no pronunciation can make otherwiſe. We can only ſay, that he lived in the infancy of our poetry, and that nothing is brought to perfection at the firſt. We muſt be children before we grow men. There was an Ennius, and in proceſs of time a Lucilius, and a Lucretius, before Virgil and Horace; even after Chaucer there was a Spenſer, a Harrington, a Fairfax, before Waller and Denham were in being: and our numbers were in their nonage till theſe laſt appeared. I need ſay little of his parentage, life, and fortunes: they are to be found at large in all the editions of his works. He was employed abroad, and favoured by Edward the Third, Richard the Second, and Henry the Fourth, and was poet, as I ſuppoſe, to all three of them. In Richard's time, I doubt, he was a little dipt in the rebellion of the commons; and being brother-in-law to John of Graunt, it was no wonder if he followed the fortunes of that family; and was well with Henry the Fourth when he had depoſed his predeceſſor. Neither is it to be admired, that Henry, who was a wiſe as well as a valiant prince, who claimed by ſucceſſion, and was ſenſible that his title was not ſound, but was rightfully in Mortimer, who had married the heir of York; it was not to be admired, I ſay, if that great politician ſhould be pleaſed to have the greateſt

greateſt wit of thoſe times in his intereſts, and to be the trumpet of his praiſes. Auguſtus had given him the example, by the advice of Mæcenas, who recommended Virgil and Horace to him; whoſe praiſes helped to make him popular while he was alive, and after his death have made him precious to poſterity. As for the religion of our poet, he ſeems to have ſome little bias towards the opinions of Wickliff, after John of Gaunt his patron; ſomewhat of which appears in the tale of Piers Plowman: yet I cannot blame him for inveighing ſo ſharply againſt the vices of the clergy in his age: their pride, their ambition, their pomp, their avarice, their worldly intereſt, deſerved the laſhes which he gave them, both in that, and in moſt of his Canterbury tales: neither has his contemporary Boccace ſpared them. Yet both thoſe poets lived in much eſteem with good and holy men in orders: for the ſcandal which is given by particular prieſts, reflects not on the ſacred function. Chaucer's Monk, his Chanon, and his Fryer, took not from the character of his Good Parſon. A ſatyrical poet is the check of the laymen, on bad prieſts. We are only to take care, that we involve not the innocent with the guilty in the ſame condemnation. The good cannot be too much honoured, nor the bad too coarſely uſed: for the corruption of the beſt becomes the worſt. When a clergyman is whipped, his gown is firſt taken off, by which the dignity of his order is ſecured: if he be wrongfully accuſed, he has his action of ſlander; and it is at the poet's peril, if he tranſgreſs the law. But they will tell us, that all kind of ſatire, though never

ſo

ſo well deſerved by particular prieſts, yet brings the whole order into contempt. Is then the peerage of England any thing diſhonoured, when a peer ſuffers for his treaſon? If he be libeled, or any way defamed, he has his "Scandalum Magnatum" to puniſh the offender. They, who uſe this kind of argument, ſeem to be conſcious to themſelves of ſomewhat which has deſerved the poet's laſh; and are leſs concerned for their public capacity, than for their private; at leaſt there is pride at the bottom of their reaſoning. If the faults of men in orders are only to be judged among themſelves, they are all in ſome ſort parties: for, ſince they ſay the honour of their order is concerned in every member of it, how can we be ſure, that they will be impartial judges? How far I may be allowed to ſpeak my opinion in this caſe, I know not: but I am ſure a diſpute of this nature cauſed miſchief in abundance betwixt a king of England and an archbiſhop of Canterbury; one ſtanding up for the Laws of his land, and the other for the honour (as he called it) of God's Church; which ended in the murther of the prelate, and in the whipping of his majeſty from poſt to pillar for his penance. The learned and ingenious Dr. Drake has ſaved me the labour of inquiring into the eſteem and reverence which the prieſts have had of old; and I would rather extend than diminiſh any part of it: yet I muſt needs ſay, that when a prieſt provokes me without any occaſion given him, I have no reaſon, unleſs it be the charity of a Chriſtian, to forgive him. "Prior læſit" is juſtification ſufficient in the Civil Law.

If I anſwer him in his own language, ſelf-defence, I am ſure, muſt be allowed me; and if I carry it farther, even to a ſharp recrimination, ſomewhat may be indulged to human frailty. Yet my reſentment has not wrought ſo far, but that I have followed Chaucer in his character of a holy man, and have enlarged on that ſubject with ſome pleaſure, reſerving to myſelf the right, if I ſhall think fit hereafter, to deſcribe another ſort of prieſts, ſuch as are more eaſily to be found than the good parſon; ſuch as have given the laſt blow to Chriſtianity in this age, by a practice ſo contrary to their doctrine. But this will keep cold till another time. In the mean while, I take up Chaucer where I left him. He muſt have been a man of a moſt wonderful comprehenſive nature, becauſe, as it has been truly obſerved of him, he has taken into the compaſs of his Canterbury tales the various manners and humours (as we now call them) of the whole Engliſh nation, in his age. Not a ſingle character has eſcaped him. All his pilgrims are ſeverally diſtinguiſhed from each other; and not only in their inclinations, but in their very phyſiognomies and perſons. Baptiſta Porta could not have deſcribed their natures better, than by the marks which the poet gives them. The matter and manner of their tales, and of their telling, are ſo ſuited to their different educations, humours, and callings, that each of them would be improper in any other mouth. Even the grave and ſerious characters are diſtinguiſhed by their ſeveral ſorts of gravity: their diſcourſes are ſuch as belong to their age, their calling, and their breeding;

breeding; ſuch as are becoming of them, and of them only. Some of his perſons are vicious, and ſome virtuous; ſome are unlearned, or (as Chaucer calls them) lewd, and ſome are learned. Even the ribaldry of the low characters is different: the Reeve, the Miller, and the Cook, are ſeveral men, and diſtinguiſhed from each other, as much as the mincing lady prioreſs, and the broad-ſpeaking gap-toothed wife of Bath. But enough of this: there is ſuch a variety of game ſpringing up before me, that I am diſtracted in my choice, and know not which to follow. It is ſufficient to ſay, according to the proverb, that here is God's plenty. We have our fore-fathers and great grand-dames all before us, as they were in Chaucer's days; their general characters are ſtill remaining in mankind, and even in England, though they are called by other names than thoſe of Monks and Friars, and Chanons, and lady Abbeſſes, and Nuns: for mankind is ever the ſame, and nothing loſt out of nature, though every thing is altered. May I have leave to do myſelf the juſtice, (ſince my enemies will do me none, and are ſo far from granting me to be a good poet, that they will not allow me ſo much as to be a Chriſtian, or a moral man); may I have leave, I ſay, to inform my reader, that I have confined my choice to ſuch tales of Chaucer as favour nothing of immodeſty. If I had deſired more to pleaſe than to inſtruct, the Reeve, the Miller, the Shipman, the Merchants, the Sumner, and, above all, the Wife of Bath, in the prologue to her tale, would have procured me as many friends and readers, as there are

beaux

beaux and ladies of pleaſure in the town. But I will no more offend againſt good-manners: I am ſenſible, as I ought to be, of the ſcandal I have given by my looſe writings; and make what reparation I am able, by this public acknowledgment. If any thing of this nature, or of profaneneſs, be crept into theſe poems, I am ſo far from defending it, that I diſown it. "Totum hoc indictum volo." Chaucer makes another manner of apology for his broad-ſpeaking, and Boccace makes the like; but I will follow neither of them. Our countryman, in the end of his characters, before the Canterbury tales, thus excuſes the ribaldry, which is very groſs in many of his novels.

But firſt, I pray you of your courteſy,
That ye ne arrettee it nought my villany,
Though that I plainly ſpeak in this mattere
To tellen you her words, and eke her chere:
Ne though I ſpeak her words properly,
For this ye knowen as well as I,
Who ſhall tellen a tale after a man,
He mote rehearſe as nye, as ever he can:
Everich word of it been in his charge,
All ſpeke he, never ſo rudely, ne large.
Or elſe he mote tellen his tale untrue,
Or feine things, or find words new:
He may not ſpare, although he were his brother,
He mote as well ſay o word as another.
Chriſt ſpake himſelf full broad in holy writ,
And well I wote no villany is it,

Eke Plato ſaith, who ſo can him rede,
The words mote been couſin to the dede.

Yet if a man ſhould have inquired of Boccace or of Chaucer, what need they had of introducing ſuch characters, where obſcene words were proper in their mouths, but very indecent to be heard; I know not what anſwer they could have made: for that reaſon, ſuch tale ſhall be left untold by me. You have here a ſpecimen of Chaucer's language, which is ſo obſolete, that his ſenſe is ſcarce to be underſtood; and you have likewiſe more than one example of his unequal numbers, which were mentioned before. Yet many of his verſes conſiſt of ten ſyllables, and the words not much behind our preſent Engliſh: as for example, theſe two lines, in the deſcription of the carpenter's young wife:

Wincing ſhe was, as is a jolly colt,
Long as a maſt, and upright as a bolt.

I have almoſt done with Chaucer, when I have anſwered ſome objections relating to my preſent work. I find ſome people are offended that I have turned theſe tales into modern Engliſh; becauſe they think them unworthy of my pains, and look on Chaucer as a dry, old-faſhioned wit, not worth reviving. I have often heard the late earl of Leiceſter ſay, that Mr. Cowley himſelf was of that opinion; who, having read him over at my lord's requeſt, declared he had no taſte of him. I dare not advance my opinion againſt the judgment of ſo great an author: but I think it fair, however, to leave the deciſion to the public: Mr. Cowley

was

was too modeſt to ſet up for a dictator; and being ſhocked perhaps with his old ſtile, never examined into the depth of his good ſenſe. Chaucer, I confeſs, is a rough diamond, and muſt firſt be poliſhed, ere he ſhines. I deny not likewiſe, that, living in our early days of poetry, he writes not always of a piece: but ſometimes mingles trivial things with thoſe of greater moment. Sometimes alſo, though not often, he runs riot, like Ovid, and knows not when he has ſaid enough. But there are more great wits beſides Chaucer, whoſe fault is their exceſs of conceits, and thoſe ill ſorted. An author is not to write all he can, but only all he ought. Having obſerved this redundancy in Chaucer (as it is an eaſy matter for a man of ordinary parts to find a fault in one of greater), I have not tied myſelf to a literal tranſlation; but have often omitted what I judged unneceſſary, or not of dignity enough to appear in the company of better thoughts. I have preſumed farther, in ſome places, and added ſomewhat of my own where I thought my author was deficient, and had not given his thoughts their true luſtre, for want of words in the beginning of our language. And to this I was the more emboldened, becauſe (if I may be permitted to ſay it of myſelf) I found I had a ſoul congenial to his, and that I had been converſant in the ſame ſtudies. Another poet, in another age, may take the ſame liberty with my writings; if at leaſt they live long enough to deſerve correction. It was alſo neceſſary ſometimes to reſtore the ſenſe of Chaucer, which was loſt or mangled in the errors of the preſs: let this example ſuffice at preſent;

in the ſtory of Palamon and Arcite, where the temple of Diana is deſcribed, you find theſe verſes, in all the editions of our author:

There ſaw I Danè turned into a tree,
I mean, not the goddeſs Diane,
But Venus daughter, which that hight Danè:

Which after a little conſideration I knew was to be reformed into this ſenſe, that Daphne the daughter of Peneus was turned into a tree. I durſt not make thus bold with Ovid, leſt ſome future Milbourn ſhould ariſe, and ſay, I varied from my author, becauſe I underſtood him not.

But there are other judges who think I ought not to have tranſlated Chaucer into Engliſh, out of a quite contrary notion: they ſuppoſe there is a certain veneration due to his old language; and that it is little leſs than profanation and ſacrilege to alter it. They are farther of opinion, that ſomewhat of his good ſenſe will ſuffer in this transfuſion, and much of the beauty of his thoughts will infallibly be loſt, which appear with more grace in their old habit. Of this opinion was that excellent perſon, whom I mentioned, the late earl of Leiceſter, who valued Chaucer as much as Mr. Cowley deſpiſed him. My lord diſſuaded me from this attempt, (for I was thinking of it ſome years before his death) and his authority prevailed ſo far with me, as to defer my undertaking while he lived, in deference to him: yet my reaſon was not convinced with what he urged againſt it. If the firſt end of a writer be

to be underſtood, then as his language grows obſolete, his thoughts muſt grow obſcure:

"Multa renaſcentur quæ jam cecidere; cadentque,
"Quæ nunc ſunt in honore vocabula; ſi volet uſus,
"Quem penès arbitrium eſt, & jus, & norma loquendi."

When an ancient word for its ſound and ſignificancy deſerves to be revived, I have that reaſonable veneration for antiquity, to reſtore it. All beyond this is ſuperſtition. Words are not like landmarks, ſo ſacred as never to be removed; cuſtoms are changed; and even ſtatutes are ſilently repealed, when the reaſon ceaſes for which they were enacted. As for the other part of the argument, that his thoughts will loſe of their original beauty, by the innovation of words; in the firſt place, not only their beauty, but their being is loſt, where they are no longer underſtood, which is the preſent caſe. I grant that ſomething muſt be loſt in all transfuſion, that is, in all tranſlations; but the ſenſe will remain, which would otherwiſe be loſt, or at leaſt be maimed, when it is ſcarce intelligible; and that but to a few. How few are there who can read Chaucer, ſo as to underſtand him perfectly! And if imperfectly, then with leſs profit and no pleaſure. It is not for the uſe of ſome old Saxon friends, that I have taken theſe pains with him: let them neglect my verſion, becauſe they have no need of it. I made it for their ſakes who underſtand ſenſe and poetry as well as they, when that poetry and ſenſe is put into words which they underſtand. I will go farther, and dare to add, that what beauties I loſe in ſome places, I give to others which had them not originally: but in this I

may be partial to myſelf; let the reader judge, and I ſubmit to his deciſion. Yet I think I have juſt occaſion to complain of them, who, becauſe they underſtand Chaucer, would deprive the greater part of their countrymen of the ſame advantage, and hoard him up, as miſers do their grandam gold, only to look on it themſelves, and hinder others from making uſe of it. In ſum, I ſeriouſly proteſt, that no man ever had, or can have, a greater veneration for Chaucer, than myſelf. I have tranſlated ſome part of his works, only that I might perpetuate his memory, or at leaſt refreſh it, amongſt my countrymen. If I have altered him any where for the better, I muſt at the ſame time acknowledge, that I could have done nothing without him: "Facile eſt inventis addere," is no great commendation; and I am not ſo vain to think I have deſerved a greater. I will conclude what I have to ſay of him ſingly, with this one remark: a lady of my acquaintance, who keeps a kind of correſpondence with ſome authors of the fair ſex in France, has been informed by them, that Mademoiſelle de Scudery, who is as old as Sibyl, and inſpired like her by the ſame god of poetry, is at this time tranſlating Chaucer into modern French. From which I gather, that he has been formerly tranſlated into the old Provençal (for how ſhe ſhould come to underſtand old Engliſh I know not). But the matter of fact being true, it makes me think that there is ſomething in it like fatality; that, after certain periods of time, the fame and memory of great wits ſhould be renewed, as Chaucer is both in France and England. If

this be wholly chance, it is extraordinary, and I dare not call it more, for fear of being taxed with ſuperſtition.

Boccace comes laſt to be conſidered, who, living in the ſame age with Chaucer, had the ſame genius, and followed the ſame ſtudies: both writ novels, and each of them cultivated his mother tongue. But the greateſt reſemblance of our two modern authors being in their familiar ſtile, and pleaſing way of relating comical adventures, I may paſs it over, becauſe I have tranſlated nothing from Boccace of that nature. In the ſerious part of poetry, the advantage is wholly on Chaucer's ſide; for though the Engliſhman has borrowed many tales from the Italian, yet it appears that thoſe of Boccace were not generally of his own making, but taken from authors of former ages, and by him only modelled: ſo that what there was of invention in either of them, may be judged equal. But Chaucer has refined on Boccace, and has mended the ſtories which he has borrowed, in his way of telling; though proſe allows more liberty of thought, and the expreſſion is more eaſy when unconfined by numbers. Our countryman carries weight, and yet wins the race at diſadvantage. I deſire not the reader ſhould take my word: and therefore I will ſet two of their diſcourſes on the ſame ſubject, in the ſame light, for every man to judge betwixt them. I tranſlated Chaucer firſt, and, amongſt the reſt, pitched on the Wife of Bath's tale; not daring, as I have ſaid, to adventure on her prologue, becauſe it is too licentious: there Chaucer introduces an old woman of mean parentage, whom a youthful knight of noble blood was

forced to marry, and conſequently loathed her: the crone being in bed with him on the wedding-night, and finding his averſion, endeavours to win his affection by reaſon, and ſpeaks a good word for herſelf, (as who could blame her?) in hope to mollify the ſullen bridegroom. She takes her topics from the benefits of poverty, the advantages of old age and uglineſs, the vanity of youth, and the ſilly pride of anceſtry and titles without inherent virtue, which is the true nobility. When I had cloſed Chaucer, I returned to Ovid, and tranſlated ſome more of his fables; and by this time had ſo far forgotten the wife of Bath's tale, that, when I took up Boccace, unawares I fell on the ſame argument of preferring virtue to nobility of blood, and titles, in the ſtory of Sigiſmunda; which I had certainly avoided for the reſemblance of the two diſcourſes, if my memory had not failed me. Let the reader weigh them both; and if he thinks me partial to Chaucer, it is in him to right Boccace.

I prefer in our countryman, far above all his other ſtories, the noble poem of Palamon and Arcite, which is of the Epic kind, and perhaps not much inferior to the Ilias or the Æneis: the ſtory is more pleaſing than either of them, the manners as perfect, the diction as poetical, the learning as deep and various; and the diſpoſition full as artful; only it includes a greater length of time, as taking up ſeven years at leaſt; but Ariſtotle has left undecided the duration of the action; which yet is eaſily reduced into the compaſs of a year, by a narration of what preceded the return

turn of Palamon to Athens. I had thought for the honour of our nation, and more particularly for his, whoſe laurel, though unworthy, I have worn after him, that this ſtory was of Engliſh growth, and Chaucer's own: but I was undeceived by Boccace; for caſually looking on the end of his ſeventh Giornata, I found Dioneo (under which name he ſhadows himſelf) and Fiametta (who repreſents his miſtreſs the natural daughter of Robert king of Naples) of whom theſe words are ſpoken, "Dioneo e la Fiametta granpezza conta-"rono inſieme d' Arcita, e di Palamone:" by which it appears that this ſtory was written before the time of Boccace; but the name of its author being wholly loſt, Chaucer is now become an original; and I queſtion not but the poem has received many beauties by paſſing through his noble hands. Beſides this tale, there is another of his own invention, after the manner of the Provençals, called The Flower and the Leaf; with which I was ſo particularly pleaſed, both for the invention and the moral, that I cannot hinder myſelf from recommending it to the reader.

As a corollary to this preface, in which I have done juſtice to others, I owe ſomewhat to myſelf: not that I think it worth my time to enter the liſts with one Milbourn, and one Blackmore, but barely to take notice, that ſuch men there are who have written ſcurrilouſly againſt me, without any provocation. Milbourn, who is in Orders, pretends amongſt the reſt this quarrel to me, that I have fallen foul on prieſthood: if I have, I am only to aſk pardon of good prieſts, and am afraid his

part

part of the reparation will come to little. Let him be ſatisfied that he ſhall not be able to force himſelf upon me for an adverſary. I contemn him too much to enter into competition with him. His own tranſlations of Virgil have anſwered his criticiſms on mine. If (as they ſay, he has declared in print) he prefers the verſion of Ogilby to mine, the world has made him the ſame compliment: for it is agreed on all hands, that he writes even below Ogilby: that, you will ſay, is not eaſily to be done; but what cannot Milbourn bring about? I am ſatisfied however, that while he and I live together, I ſhall not be thought the worſt poet of the age. It looks as if I had deſired him underhand to write ſo ill againſt me: but upon my honeſt word I have not bribed him to do me this ſervice, and am wholly guiltleſs of his pamphlet. It is true, I ſhould be glad, if I could perſuade him to continue his good offices, and write ſuch another critique on any thing of mine: for I find by experience he has a great ſtroke with the reader, when he condemns any of my poems, to make the world have a better opinion of them. He has taken ſome pains with my poetry; but nobody will be perſuaded to take the ſame with his. If I had taken to the church (as he affirms, but which was never in my thoughts) I ſhould have had more ſenſe, if not more grace, than to have turned myſelf out of my benefice by writing libels on my pariſhioners. But his account of my manners and my principles, are of a piece with his cavils and his poetry: and ſo I have done with him for ever.

As

As for the City Bard, or Knight Phyſician, I hear his quarrel to me is, that I was the author of Abſalom and Achitophel, which he thinks is a little hard on his fanatic patrons in London.

But I will deal the more civilly with his two poems, becauſe nothing ill is to be ſpoken of the dead: and therefore peace be to the Manes of his Arthurs. I will only ſay, that it was not for this noble knight that I drew the plan of an Epic poem on king Arthur, in my preface to the tranſlation of Juvenal. The guardian angels of kingdoms were machines too ponderous for him to manage; and therefore he rejected them, as Dares did the whirlbats of Eryx, when they were thrown before him by Entellus. Yet from that preface he plainly took his hint: for he began immediately upon the ſtory; though he had the baſeneſs not to acknowledge his benefactor; but inſtead of it, to traduce me in a libel.

I ſhall ſay the leſs of Mr Collier, becauſe in many things he has taxed me juſtly; and I have pleaded guilty to all thoughts and expreſſions of mine, which can be truly argued of obſcenity, profaneneſs, or immorality; and retract them. If he be my enemy, let him triumph; if he be my friend, as I have given him no perſonal occaſion to be otherwiſe, he will be glad of my repentance. It becomes me not to draw my pen in the defence of a bad cauſe, when I have ſo often drawn it for a good one. Yet it were not difficult to prove, that in many places he has perverted my meaning by his gloſſes; and interpreted my words into blaſphemy and bawdry,

baudry, of which they were not guilty; beſides that he is too much given to horſe-play in his raillery; and comes to battle like a dictator from the plough. I will not ſay, The zeal of God's houſe has eaten him up; but I am ſure it has devoured ſome part of his good-manners and civility. It might alſo be doubted whether it were altogether zeal, which prompted him to this rough manner of proceeding; perhaps it became not one of his function to rake into the rubbiſh of ancient and modern plays; a divine might have employed his pains to better purpoſe, than in the naſtineſs of Plautus and Ariſtophanes; whoſe examples, as they excuſe not me, ſo it might be poſſibly ſuppoſed, that he read them not without ſome pleaſure. They who have written commentaries on thoſe poets, or on Horace, Juvenal, and Martial, have explained ſome vices, which without their interpretation had been unknown to modern times. Neither has he judged impartially betwixt the former age and us.

There is more baudry in one Play of Fletcher's, called The Cuſtom of the Country, than in all ours together. Yet this has been often acted on the ſtage in my remembrance. Are the times ſo much more reformed now, than they were five and twenty years ago? If they are, I congratulate the amendment of our morals. But I am not to prejudice the cauſe of my fellow-poets, though I abandon my own defence: they have ſome of them anſwered for themſelves, and neither they nor I can think Mr. Collier ſo formidable an enemy, that we ſhould ſhun him. He has loſt ground at the latter end

of

of the day, by purſuing his point too far, like the prince of Conde at the battle of Senneph: from immoral plays, to no plays; "ab abuſu ad uſum, non valet "conſequentia." But being a party, I am not to erect myſelf into a judge. As for the reſt of thoſe who have written againſt me, they are ſuch ſcoundrels, that they deſerve not the leaſt notice to be taken of them. Blackmore and Milbourn are only diſtinguiſhed from the crowd, by being remembered to their infamy.

—— "Demetri, Teque Tigelli
"Diſcipulorum inter jubeo plorare cathedras."

TALES

TALES

FROM

CHAUCER.

To her GRACE

The DUTCHESS of ORMOND,

With the following POEM of

PALAMON AND ARCITE.

MADAM,

THE bard who firſt adorn'd our native tongue,
Tun'd to his Britiſh lyre this ancient ſong:
Which Homer might without a bluſh rehearſe,
And leaves a doubtful palm in Virgil's verſe:
He match'd their beauties, where they moſt excel;
Of love ſung better, and of arms as well.
Vouchſafe, illuſtrious Ormond, to behold
What power the charms of beauty had of old;
Nor wonder if ſuch deeds of arms were done,
Inſpir'd by two fair eyes that ſparkled like your own.
If Chaucer by the beſt idea wrought,
And poets can divine each other's thought,
The faireſt nymph before his eyes he ſet;
And then the faireſt was Plantagenet;
Who three contending princes made their prize,
And rul'd the rival nations with her eyes:
Who left immortal trophies of her fame,
And to the nobleſt order gave the name.
Like her, of equal kindred to the throne,
You keep her conqueſts, and extend your own:

As when the ſtars in their etherial race,
At length have roll'd around the liquid ſpace,
At certain periods they reſume their place,
From the ſame point of heaven their courſe advance,
And move in meaſures of their former dance;
Thus, after length of ages, ſhe returns,
Reſtor'd in you, and the ſame place adorns;
Or you perform her office in the ſphere,
Born of her blood, and make a new platonic year.
O true Plantagenet, O race divine,
(For beauty ſtill is fatal to the line,)
Had Chaucer liv'd that angel-face to view,
Sure he had drawn his Emily from you;
Or had you liv'd to judge the doubtful right,
Your noble Palamon had been the knight;
And conquering Theſeus from his ſide had ſent
Your generous lord, to guide the Theban government.
Time ſhall accompliſh that; and I ſhall ſee
A Palamon in him, in you an Emily.
Already have the Fates your path prepar'd,
And ſure preſage your future ſway declar'd:
When weſtward, like the ſun, you took your way,
And from benighted Britain bore the day,
Blue Triton gave the ſignal from the ſhore,
The ready Nereids heard, and ſwam before
To ſmooth the ſeas; a ſoft Etefian gale
But juſt inſpir'd, and gently ſwell'd the ſail;
Portunus took his turn, whoſe ample hand
Heav'd up his lighten'd keel, and ſunk the ſand,
And ſteer'd the ſacred veſſel ſafe to land.

The

The land, if not reſtrain'd, had met your way,
Projected out a neck, and jutted to the ſea.
Hibernia, proſtrate at your feet, ador'd
In you, the pledge of her expected lord;
Due to her iſle; a venerable name;
His father and his grandſire known to fame;
Aw'd by that houſe, accuſtom'd to command,
The ſturdy Kerns in due ſubjection ſtand;
Nor bear the reins in any foreign hand.
At your approach, they crouded to the port;
And, ſcarcely landed, you create a court:
As Ormond's harbinger, to you they run;
For Venus is the promiſe of the ſun.
The waſte of civil wars, their towns deſtroy'd,
Pales unhonour'd, Ceres unemploy'd,
Were all forgot; and one triumphant day
Wip'd all the tears of three campaigns away.
Blood, rapines, maſſacres, were cheaply bought,
So mighty recompence your beauty brought.
As when the dove returning bore the mark
Of earth reſtor'd to the long labouring ark,
The relicks of mankind, ſecure of reſt,
Ope'd every window to receive the gueſt,
And the fair bearer of the meſſage bleſs'd;
So, when you came, with loud repeated cries,
The nation took an omen from your eyes,
And God advanc'd his rainbow in the ſkies,
To ſign inviolable peace reſtor'd;
The ſaints with ſolemn ſhouts proclaim'd the new accord.

When at your ſecond coming you appear,
(For I foretel that millenary year)
The ſharpen'd ſhare ſhall vex the ſoil no more,
But earth unbidden ſhall produce her ſtore;
The land ſhall laugh, the circling ocean ſmile,
And heaven's indulgence bleſs the holy iſle.
Heaven from all ages has reſerv'd for you
That happy clime, which venom never knew;
Or if it had been there, your eyes alone
Have power to chaſe all poiſon, but their own.
Now in this interval, which fate has caſt
Betwixt your future glories and your paſt,
This pauſe of power, 'tis Ireland's hour to mourn;
While England celebrates your ſafe return,
By which you ſeem the ſeaſons to command,
And bring our ſummers back to their forſaken land.
The vanquiſh'd iſle our leiſure muſt attend,
Till the fair bleſſing we vouchſafe to ſend;
Nor can we ſpare you long, though often we may lend.
The dove was twice employ'd abroad, before
The world was dry'd, and ſhe return'd no more.
Nor dare we truſt ſo ſoft a meſſenger,
New from her ſickneſs, to that northern air;
Reſt here a while your luſtre to reſtore,
That they may ſee you, as you ſhone before;
For yet, th' eclipſe not wholly paſt, you wade
Through ſome remains, and dimneſs of a ſhade.
A ſubject in his prince may claim a right,
Nor ſuffer him with ſtrength impair'd to fight;

Till

Till force returns, his ardor we reſtrain,
And curb his warlike wiſh to croſs the main.
Now paſt the danger, let the learn'd begin
Th' inquiry, where diſeaſe could enter in;
How thoſe malignant atoms forc'd their way,
What in the faultleſs frame they found to make their prey?
Where every element was weigh'd ſo well,
That heaven alone, who mix'd the maſs, could tell
Which of the four ingredients could rebel;
And where, impriſon'd in ſo ſweet a cage,
A ſoul might well be pleas'd to paſs an age.
And yet the fine materials made it weak:
Porcelain, by being pure, is apt to break:
Ev'n to your breaſt the ſickneſs durſt aſpire;
And, forc'd from that fair temple to retire,
Profanely ſet the holy place on fire.
In vain your lord like young Veſpaſian mourn'd,
When the fierce flames the ſanctuary burn'd:
And I prepar'd to pay in verſes rude
A moſt deteſted act of gratitude:
Ev'n this had been your elegy, which now
Is offer'd for your health, the table of my vow.
Your angel ſure our Morley's mind inſpir'd,
To find the remedy your ill requir'd;
As once the Macedon, by Jove's decree,
Was taught to dream an herb for Ptolomee:
Or heaven, which had ſuch over-coſt beſtow'd,
As ſcarce it could afford to fleſh and blood,
So lik'd the frame, he would not work anew,
To ſave the charges of another you.

Or by his middle ſcience did he ſteer,
And ſaw ſome great contingent good appear
Well worth a miracle to keep you here:
And for that end, preſerv'd the precious mould,
Which all the future Ormonds was to hold;
And meditated in his better mind
An heir from you, which may redeem the failing kind.

Bleſt be the power which has at once reſtor'd
The hopes of loſt ſucceſſion to your lord,
Joy to the firſt and laſt of each degree,
Virtue to courts, and, what I long'd to ſee,
To you the Graces, and the Muſe to me.
O daughter of the roſe, whoſe cheeks unite
The differing titles of the red and white;
Who heaven's alternate beauty well diſplay,
The bluſh of morning and the milky way;
Whoſe face is paradiſe, but fenc'd from ſin:
For God in either eye has plac'd a cherubin.

All is your lord's alone; ev'n abſent, he
Employs the care of chaſte Penelope.
For him you waſte in tears your widow'd hours,
For him your curious needle paints the flowers;
Such works of old Imperial dames were taught;
Such, for Aſcanius, fair Eliſa wrought.
The ſoft receſſes of your hours improve
The three fair pledges of your happy love:
All other parts of pious duty done,
You owe your Ormond nothing but a ſon;
To fill in future times his father's place,
And wear the garter of his mother's race.

PALA-

PALAMON AND ARCITE:

OR,

THE KNIGHT'S TALE.

BOOK I.

IN days of old, there liv'd, of mighty fame,
A valiant prince, and Theſeus was his name:
A chief who more in feats of arms excell'd,
The riſing nor the ſetting ſun beheld.
Of Athens he was lord; much land he won,
And added foreign countries to his crown.
In Scythia with the warrior queen he ſtrove,
Whom firſt by force he conquer'd, then by love;
He brought in triumph back the beauteous dame,
With whom her ſiſter, fair Emilia, came.
With honour to his home let Theſeus ride,
With love to friend, and fortune for his guide,
And his victorious army at his ſide.
I paſs their warlike pomp, their proud array,
Their ſhouts, their ſongs, their welcome on the way:
But, were it not too long, I would recite
The feats of Amazons, the fatal fight
Betwixt the hardy queen and hero knight;
The town beſieg'd, and how much blood it coſt
The female army and th' Athenian hoſt;
The ſpouſals of Hippolita the queen;
What tilts and turneys at the feaſt were ſeen;

The ſtorm at their return, the ladies fear:
But theſe, and other things, I muſt forbear.
The field is ſpacious I deſign to ſow,
With oxen far unfit to draw the plow:
The remnant of my tale is of a length
To tire your patience, and to waſte my ſtrength;
And trivial accidents ſhall be forborn,
That others may have time to take their turn;
As was at firſt enjoin'd us by mine hoſt:
That he whoſe tale is beſt, and pleaſes moſt,
Should win his ſupper at our common coſt.
And therefore where I left, I will purſue
This ancient ſtory, whether falſe or true,
In hope it may be mended with a new.
The prince I mention'd, full of high renown,
In this array drew near th' Athenian town;
When in his pomp and utmoſt of his pride,
Marching he chanc'd to caſt his eye aſide,
And ſaw a choir of mourning dames, who lay
By two and two acroſs the common way:
At his approach they rais'd a rueful cry,
And beat their breaſts, and held their hands on high,
Creeping and crying, till they ſeiz'd at laſt
His courſer's bridle, and his feet embrac'd.
Tell me, ſaid Theſeus, what and whence you are,
And why this funeral pageant you prepare?
Is this the welcome of my worthy deeds,
To meet my triumph in ill-omen'd weeds?
Or envy you my praiſe, and would deſtroy
With grief my pleaſures, and pollute my joy?

Or

Or are you injur'd, and demand relief?
Name your requeſt, and I will eaſe your grief.
The moſt in years of all the mourning train
Began (but ſwooned firſt away for pain);
Then ſcarce recover'd ſpoke: nor envy we
Thy great renown, nor grudge thy victory;
'Tis thine, O king, th' afflicted to redreſs,
And fame has fill'd the world with thy ſucceſs:
We wretched women ſue for that alone,
Which of thy goodneſs is refus'd to none;
Let fall ſome drops of pity on our grief,
If what we beg be juſt, and we deſerve relief:
For none of us, who now thy grace implore,
But held the rank of ſovereign queen before;
Till, thanks to giddy chance, which never bears,
That mortal bliſs ſhould laſt for length of years,
She caſt us headlong from our high eſtate,
And here in hope of thy return we wait:
And long have waited in the temple nigh,
Built to the gracious goddeſs Clemency.
But reverence thou the power whoſe name it bears,
Relieve th' oppreſs'd, and wipe the widow's tears.
I, wretched I, have other fortune ſeen,
The wife of Capaneus, and once a queen:
At Thebes he fell; curſt be the fatal day!
And all the reſt thou ſeeſt in this array,
To make their moan, their lords in battle loſt
Before that town beſieg'd by our confederate hoſt:
But Creon, old and impious, who commands
The Theban city, and uſurps the lands,

Denies

Denies the rites of funeral fires to thoſe
Whoſe breathleſs bodies yet he calls his foes.
Unburn'd, unbury'd, on a heap they lie;
Such is their fate, and ſuch his tyranny;
No friend has leave to bear away the dead,
But with their lifeleſs limbs his hounds are fed:
At this ſhe ſhriek'd aloud; the mournful train
Echo'd her grief, and, groveling on the plain,
With groans, and hands upheld, to move his mind,
Beſought his pity to their helpleſs kind!
The prince was touch'd, his tears began to flow,
And, as his tender heart would break in two,
He ſigh'd; and could not but their fate deplore,
So wretched now, ſo fortunate before.
Then lightly from his lofty ſteed he flew,
And raiſing one by one the ſuppliant crew,
To comfort each, full ſolemnly he ſwore,
That by the faith which knights to knighthood bore,
And what e'er elſe to chivalry belongs,
He would not ceaſe, till he reveng'd their wrongs:
That Greece ſhould ſee perform'd what he declar'd;
And cruel Creon find his juſt reward.
He ſaid no more, but, ſhunning all delay,
Rode on; nor enter'd Athens on his way:
But left his ſiſter and his queen behind,
And wav'd his royal banner in the wind:
Where in an argent field the god of war
Was drawn triumphant on his iron car;
Red was his ſword, and ſhield, and whole attire,
And all the godhead ſeem'd to glow with fire;

Ev'n the ground glitter'd where the ſtandard flew,
And the green graſs was dy'd to ſanguine hue.
High on his pointed lance his pennon bore
His Cretan fight, the conquer'd Minotaure:
The ſoldiers ſhout around with generous rage,
And in that victory their own preſage.
He prais'd their ardour; inly pleas'd to ſee
His hoſt the flower of Grecian chivalry.
All day he march'd; and all th' enſuing night;
And ſaw the city with returning light.
The proceſs of the war I need not tell;
How Theſeus conquer'd, and how Creon fell:
Or after, how by ſtorm the walls were won,
Or how the victor ſack'd and burn'd the town:
How to the ladies he reſtor'd again
The bodies of their lords in battle ſlain:
And with what ancient rites they were interr'd;
All theſe to fitter times ſhall be deferr'd:
I ſpare the widows tears, their woeful cries,
And howling at their huſbands obſequies;
How Theſeus at theſe funerals did aſſiſt,
And with what gifts the mourning dames diſmiſs'd.
Thus when the victor chief had Creon ſlain,
And conquer'd Thebes, he pitch'd upon the plain
His mighty camp, and, when the day return'd,
The country waſted, and the hamlets burn'd,
And left the pillagers, to rapine bred,
Without control to ſtrip and ſpoil the dead.
There, in a heap of ſlain, among the reſt
Two youthful knights they found beneath a load oppreſs'd
Of

Of ſlaughter'd foes, whom firſt to death they ſent,
The trophies of their ſtrength, a bloody monument.
Both fair, and both of royal blood they ſeem'd,
Whom kinſmen to the crown the heralds deem'd;
That day in equal arms they fought for fame;
Their ſwords, their ſhields, their ſurcoats, were the ſame.
Cloſe by each other laid, they preſs'd the ground,
Their manly boſoms pierc'd with many a grieſly wound:
Nor well alive, nor wholly dead they were,
But ſome faint ſigns of feeble life appear:
The wandering breath was on the wing to part,
Weak was the pulſe, and hardly heav'd the heart.
Theſe two were ſiſters' ſons; and Arcite one,
Much fam'd in fields, with valiant Palamon.
From theſe their coſtly arms the ſpoilers rent,
And ſoftly both convey'd to Theſeus' tent:
Whom known of Creon's line, and cur'd with care,
He to his city ſent as priſoners of the war,
Hopeleſs of ranſom, and condemn'd to lie
In durance, doom'd a lingering death to die.
This done, he march'd away with warlike ſound,
And to his Athens turn'd with laurels crown'd,
Where happy long he liv'd, much lov'd, and more renown'd.
But in a tower, and never to be loos'd,
The woeful captive kinſmen are inclos'd:
Thus year by year they paſs, and day by day,
Till once, 'twas on the morn of chearful May,
The young Emilia, fairer to be ſeen
Than the fair lily on the flowery green,

More

More freſh than May herſelf in bloſſoms new,
For with the roſy colour ſtrove her hue,
Wak'd, as her cuſtom was, before the day,
To do th' obſervance due to ſprightly May:
For ſprightly May commands our youth to keep
The vigils of her night, and breaks their ſluggard ſleep;
Each gentle breaſt with kindly warmth ſhe moves;
Inſpires new flames, revives extinguiſh'd loves.
In this remembrance Emily ere day
Aroſe, and dreſs'd herſelf in rich array;
Freſh as the month, and as the morning fair;
Adown her ſhoulders fell her length of hair:
A ribband did the braided treſſes bind,
The reſt was looſe, and wanton'd in the wind:
Aurora had but newly chas'd the night,
And purpled o'er the ſky with bluſhing light,
When to the garden walk ſhe took her way,
To ſport and trip along in cool of day,
And offer maiden vows in honour of the May.

At every turn, ſhe made a little ſtand,
And thruſt among the thorns her lily hand
To draw the roſe, and every roſe ſhe drew
She ſhook the ſtalk, and bruſh'd away the dew:
Then party-colour'd flowers of white and red
She wove, to make a garland for her head:
This done, ſhe ſung and carol'd out ſo clear,
That men and angels might rejoice to hear:
Ev'n wondering Philomel forgot to ſing;
And learn'd from her to welcome-in the ſpring.

The

The tower, of which before was mention made,
Within whoſe keep the captive knights were laid,
Built of a large extent, and ſtrong withal,
Was one partition of the palace wall:
The garden was inclos'd within the ſquare,
Where young Emilia took the morning-air.
It happen'd Palamon the priſoner knight,
Reſtleſs for woe, aroſe before the light,
And with his jaylor's leave deſir'd to breathe
An air more wholeſome than the damps beneath.
This granted, to the tower he took his way,
Chear'd with the promiſe of a glorious day:
Then caſt a languiſhing regard around,
And ſaw with hateful eyes the temples crown'd
With golden ſpires, and all the hoſtile ground.
He ſigh'd, and turn'd his eyes, becauſe he knew
'Twas but a larger gaol he had in view;
Then look'd below, and from the caſtle's height
Beheld a nearer and more pleaſing ſight,
The garden, which before he had not ſeen,
In ſpring's new livery clad of white and green,
Freſh flowers in wide parterres, and ſhady walks between.
This view'd, but not enjoy'd, with arms acroſs
He ſtood, reflecting on his country's loſs;
Himſelf an object of the public ſcorn,
And often wiſh'd he never had been born.
At laſt, for ſo his deſtiny requir'd,
With walking giddy, and with thinking tir'd,

He

He through a little window caſt his ſight,
Though thick of bars that gave a ſcanty light:
But ev'n that glimmering ſerv'd him to deſcry
Th' inevitable charms of Emily.
Scarce had he ſeen, but, ſeiz'd with ſudden ſmart,
Stung to the quick, he felt it at his heart;
Struck blind with over-powering light he ſtood,
Then ſtarted back amaz'd, and cry'd aloud.
Young Arcite heard; and up he ran with haſte,
To help his friend, and in his arms embrac'd;
And aſk'd him why he look'd ſo deadly wan,
And whence and how his change of cheer began?
Or who had done th' offence? But if, ſaid he,
Your grief alone is hard captivity;
For love of heaven, with patience undergo
A cureleſs ill, ſince fate will have it ſo:
So ſtood our horoſcope in chains to lie,
And Saturn in the dungeon of the ſky,
Or other baleful aſpect, rul'd our birth,
When all the friendly ſtars were under earth:
Whate'er betides, by deſtiny 'tis done;
And better bear like men, than vainly ſeek to ſhun.
Nor of my bonds, ſaid Palamon again,
Nor of unhappy planets I complain;
But when my mortal anguiſh caus'd my cry,
That moment I was hurt through either eye;
Pierc'd with a random ſhaft, I faint away,
And periſh with inſenſible decay:
A glance of ſome new goddeſs gave the wound,
Whom, like Acteon, unaware I found.

Look

Look how ſhe walks along yon ſhady ſpace,
Not Juno moves with more majeſtic grace;
And all the Cyprian queen is in her face.
If thou art Venus (for thy charms confeſs
That face was form'd in heaven, nor art thou leſs;
Diſguis'd in habit, undiſguis'd in ſhape)
O help us captives from our chains to 'ſcape;
But if our doom be paſt in bonds to lie
For life, and in a loathſome dungeon die,
Then be thy wrath appeas'd with our diſgrace,
And ſhew compaſſion to the Theban race,
Oppreſs'd by tyrant power! While yet he ſpoke,
Arcite on Emily had fix'd his look;
The fatal dart a ready paſſage found,
And deep within his heart infix'd the wound:
So that if Palamon were wounded ſore,
Arcite was hurt as much as he, or more:
Then from his inmoſt ſoul he ſigh'd, and ſaid,
The beauty I behold has ſtruck me dead:
Unknowingly ſhe ſtrikes; and kills by chance;
Poiſon is in her eyes, and death in every glance.
O, I muſt aſk; nor aſk alone, but move
Her mind to mercy, or muſt die for love.
Thus Arcite: and thus Palamon replies,
(Eager his tone, and ardent were his eyes.)
Speak'ſt thou in earneſt, or in jeſting vein?
Jeſting, ſaid Arcite, ſuits but ill with pain.
It ſuits far worſe (ſaid Palamon again,
And bent his brows) with men who honour weigh,
Their faith to break, their friendſhip to betray;

But worſt with thee, of noble lineage born,
My kinſman, and in arms my brother ſworn.
Have we not plighted each our holy oath,
That one ſhould be the common good of both;
One ſoul ſhould both inſpire, and neither prove
His fellow's hindrance in purſuit of love?
To this before the Gods we gave our hands,
And nothing but our death can break the bands.
This binds thee, then, to further my deſign:
As I am bound by vow to further thine:
Nor canſt, nor dar'ſt thou, traitor, on the plain
Appeach my honour, or thine own maintain,
Since thou art of my council, and the friend
Whoſe faith I truſt, and on whoſe care depend:
And would'ſt thou court my lady's love, which I
Much rather than releaſe would chooſe to die?
But thou, falſe Arcite, never ſhalt obtain
Thy bad pretence; I told thee firſt my pain:
For firſt my love began ere thine was born;
Thou, as my council, and my brother ſworn,
Art bound t' aſſiſt my elderſhip of right:
Or juſtly to be deem'd a perjur'd knight.
Thus Palamon: but Arcite with diſdain
In haughty language thus reply'd again;
Forſworn thyſelf: the traitor's odious name
I firſt return, and then diſprove thy claim.
If love be paſſion, and that paſſion nurſt
With ſtrong deſires, I lov'd the lady firſt.
Canſt thou pretend deſire, whom zeal inflam'd
To worſhip, and a power celeſtial nam'd?

Thine was devotion to the bleſt above,
I ſaw the woman, and deſir'd her love;
Firſt own'd my paſſion, and to thee commend
Th' important ſecret, as my choſen friend.
Suppoſe (which yet I grant not) thy deſire
A moment elder than my rival fire;
Can chance of ſeeing firſt thy title prove?
And know'ſt thou not, no law is made for love;
Law is to things which to free choice relate;
Love is not in our choice, but in our fate;
Laws are but poſitive; love's power, we ſee,
Is Nature's ſanction, and her firſt decree.
Each day we break the bond of human laws
For love, and vindicate the common cauſe.
Laws for defence of civil rights are plac'd,
Love throws the fences down, and makes a general waſte:
Maids, widows, wives, without diſtinction fall;
The ſweeping deluge, love, comes on, and covers all.
If then the laws of friendſhip I tranſgreſs,
I keep the greater, while I break the leſs;
And both are mad alike, ſince neither can poſſeſs.
Both hopeleſs to be ranſom'd, never more
To ſee the ſun, but as he paſſes o'er.
Like Æſop's hounds contending for the bone,
Each pleaded right, and would be lord alone;
The fruitleſs fight continued all the day;
A cur came by, and ſnatch'd the prize away.
As courtiers therefore juſtle for a grant,
And when they break their friendſhip plead their want,

So

So thou, if fortune will thy ſuit advance,
Love on, nor envy me my equal chance:
For I muſt love, and am reſolv'd to try
My fate, or failing in th' adventure die.
Great was their ſtrife, which hourly was renew'd,
Till each with mortal hate his rival view'd:
Now friends no more, nor walking hand in hand;
But when they met, they made a ſurly ſtand;
And glar'd like angry lions as they paſs'd,
And wiſh'd that every look might be their laſt.
It chanc'd at length, Pirithous came t' attend
This worthy Theſeus, his familiar friend;
Their love in early infancy began,
And roſe as childhood ripen'd into man.
Companions of the war; and lov'd ſo well,
That when one dy'd, as ancient ſtories tell,
His fellow to redeem him went to hell.
But to purſue my tale; to welcome home
His warlike brother is Pirithous come:
Arcite of Thebes was known in arms long ſince,
And honour'd by this young Theſſalian prince.
Theſeus, to gratify his friend and gueſt,
Who made our Arcite's freedom his requeſt,
Reſtor'd to liberty the captive knight,
But on theſe hard conditions I recite:
That if hereafter Arcite ſhould be found
Within the compaſs of Athenian ground,
By day or night, or on whate'er pretence,
His head ſhould pay the forfeit of th' offence.

To this Pirithous for his friend agreed,
And on his promiſe was the priſoner freed.
Unpleas'd and penſive hence he takes his way,
At his own peril; for his life muſt pay.
Who now but Arcite mourns his bitter fate,
Finds his dear purchaſe, and repents too late?
What have I gain'd, he ſaid, in priſon pent,
If I but change my bonds for baniſhment?
And baniſh'd from her ſight, I ſuffer more
In freedom, than I felt in bonds before;
Forc'd from her preſence, and condemn'd to live:
Unwelcome freedom, and unthank'd reprieve:
Heaven is not, but where Emily abides;
And where ſhe's abſent, all is hell beſides.
Next to my day of birth, was that accurſt,
Which bound my friendſhip to Pirithous firſt:
Had I not known that prince, I ſtill had been
In bondage, and had ſtill Emilia ſeen:
For though I never can her grace deſerve,
'Tis recompence enough to ſee and ſerve.
O Palamon, my kinſman and my friend,
How much more happy fates thy love attend!
Thine is th' adventure; thine the victory:
Well has thy fortune turn'd the dice for thee:
Thou on that angel's face may'ſt feed thine eyes,
In priſon, no; but bliſsful paradiſe!
Thou daily ſeeſt that ſun of beauty ſhine,
And lov'ſt at leaſt in love's extremeſt line.

I mourn

I mourn in abſence, love's eternal night;
And who can tell but ſince thou haſt her ſight,
And art a comely, young, and valiant knight,
Fortune (a various power) may ceaſe to frown,
And by ſome ways unknown thy wiſhes crown?
But I, the moſt forlorn of human kind,
Nor help can hope, nor remedy can find;
But, doom'd to drag my loathſome life in care,
For my reward, muſt end it in deſpair.
Fire, water, air, and earth, and force of fates
That governs all, and heaven that all creates,
Nor art, nor nature's hand can eaſe my grief;
Nothing but death, the wretch's laſt relief:
Then farewel youth, and all the joys that dwell,
With youth and life, and life itſelf farewel.
But why, alas! do mortal men in vain
Of fortune, fate, or Providence complain?
God gives us what he knows our wants require,
And better things than thoſe which we deſire:
Some pray for riches; riches they obtain;
But, watch'd by robbers, for their wealth are ſlain;
Some pray from priſon to be freed; and come,
When guilty of their vows, to fall at home;
Murder'd by thoſe they truſted with their life,
A favour'd ſervant, or a boſom wife.
Such dear-bought bleſſings happen every day,
Becauſe we know not for what things to pray.
Like drunken ſots about the ſtreet we roam:
Well knows the ſot he has a certain home;

Yet knows not how to find th' uncertain place,
And blunders on, and ſtaggers every pace.
Thus all ſeek happineſs; but few can find,
For far the greater part of men are blind.
This is my caſe, who thought our utmoſt good
Was in one word of freedom underſtood:
The fatal bleſſing came: from priſon free,
I ſtarve abroad, and loſe the ſight of Emily.
Thus Arcite; but if Arcite thus deplore
His ſufferings, Palamon yet ſuffers more.
For when he knew his rival freed and gone,
He ſwells with wrath; he makes outrageous moan:
He frets, he fumes, he ſtares, he ſtamps the ground;
The hollow tower with clamours rings around:
With briny tears he bath'd his fetter'd feet,
And dropt all o'er with agony of ſweat.
Alas! he cry'd! I wretch in priſon pine,
Too happy rival, while the fruit is thine:
Thou liv'ſt at large, thou draw'ſt thy native air,
Pleas'd with thy freedom, proud of my deſpair:
Thou mayſt, ſince thou haſt youth and courage join'd,
A ſweet behaviour and a ſolid mind,
Aſſemble ours, and all the Theban race,
To vindicate on Athens thy diſgrace;
And after, by ſome treaty made, poſſeſs
Fair Emily, the pledge of laſting peace.
So thine ſhall be the beauteous prize, while I
Muſt languiſh in deſpair, in priſon die.
Thus all th' advantage of the ſtrife is thine,
Thy portion double joys, and double ſorrows mine.

The

The rage of Jealouſy then fir'd his ſoul,
And his face kindled like a burning coal:
Now cold Deſpair, ſucceeding in her ſtead,
To livid paleneſs turns the glowing red.
His blood, ſcarce liquid, creeps within his veins,
Like water which the freezing wind conſtrains.
Then thus he ſaid: Eternal Deities,
Who rule the world with abſolute decrees,
And write whatever time ſhall bring to paſs,
With pens of adamant, on plates of braſs;
What, is the race of human kind your care
Beyond what all his fellow-creatures are?
He with the reſt is liable to pain,
And like the ſheep, his brother-beaſt, is ſlain.
Cold, hunger, priſons, ills without a cure,
All theſe he muſt, and guiltleſs oft endure;
Or does your juſtice, power, or preſcience fail,
When the good ſuffer, and the bad prevail?
What worſe to wretched virtue could befal,
If fate or giddy fortune govern'd all?
Nay, worſe than other beaſts is our eſtate;
Them, to purſue their pleaſures, you create;
We, bound by harder laws, muſt curb our will,
And your commands, not our deſires, fulfil;
Then when the creature is unjuſtly ſlain,
Yet after death at leaſt he feels no pain;
But man in life ſurcharg'd with woe before,
Not freed when dead, is doom'd to ſuffer more.
A ſerpent ſhoots his ſting at unaware;
An ambuſh'd thief forelays a traveller:

The man lies murder'd, while the thief and ſnake,
One gains the thickets, and one thrids the brake.
This let divines decide; but well I know,
Juſt or unjuſt, I have my ſhare of woe,
Through Saturn ſeated in a luckleſs place,
And Juno's wrath, that perſecutes my race;
Or Mars and Venus, in a quartil, move
My pangs of jealouſy for Arcite's love.
Let Palamon oppreſs'd in bondage mourn,
While to his exil'd rival we return.
By this, the ſun, declining from his height,
The day had ſhorten'd, to prolong the night:
The lengthen'd night gave length of miſery
Both to the captive lover and the free;
For Palamon in endleſs priſon mourns,
And Arcite forfeits life if he returns:
The baniſh'd never hopes his love to ſee,
Nor hopes the captive lord his liberty:
'Tis hard to ſay who ſuffers greater pains:
One ſees his love, but cannot break his chains:
One free, and all his motions uncontrol'd,
Beholds whate'er he would, but what he would behold.
Judge as you pleaſe, for I will haſte to tell
What fortune to the baniſh'd knight befel.
When Arcite was to Thebes return'd again,
The loſs of her he lov'd renew'd his pain;
What could be worſe, than never more to ſee
His life, his ſoul, his charming Emily?
He rav'd with all the madneſs of deſpair,
He roar'd, he beat his breaſt, he tore his hair.

Dry ſorrow in his ſtupid eyes appears,
For, wanting nouriſhment, he wanted tears:
His eye-balls in their hollow ſockets ſink.
Bereft of ſleep, he loaths his meat and drink.
He withers at his heart, and looks as wan
As the pale ſpectre of a murder'd man:
That pale turns yellow, and his face receives
The faded hue of ſapleſs boxen leaves:
In ſolitary groves he makes his moan,
Walks early out, and ever is alone:
Nor, mix'd in mirth, in youthful pleaſures ſhares,
But ſighs when ſongs and inſtruments he hears.
His ſpirits are ſo low, his voice is drown'd,
He hears as from afar, or in a ſwoon,
Like the deaf murmurs of a diſtant ſound:
Uncomb'd his locks, and ſqualid his attire,
Unlike the trim of love and gay deſire:
But full of muſeful mopings, which preſage
The loſs of reaſon, and conclude in rage.
This when he had endur'd a year and more,
Now wholly chang'd from what he was before,
It happen'd once, that, ſlumbering as he lay,
He dream'd (his dream began at break of day)
That Hermes o'er his head in air appear'd,
And with ſoft words his drooping ſpirits chear'd:
His hat, adorn'd with wings, diſclos'd the God,
And in his hand he bore the ſleep-compelling rod:
Such as he ſeem'd, when, at his ſire's command,
On Argus' head he laid the ſnaky wand.

Ariſe,

Ariſe, he ſaid, to conquering Athens go,
There fate appoints an end to all thy woe.
The fright awaken'd Arcite with a ſtart,
Againſt his boſom bounc'd his heaving heart;
But ſoon he ſaid, with ſcarce-recover'd breath,
And thither will I go, to meet my death,
Sure to be ſlain; but death is my deſire,
Since in Emilia's ſight I ſhall expire.
By chance he ſpy'd a mirror while he ſpoke,
And gazing there beheld his alter'd look;
Wondering, he ſaw his features and his hue
So much were chang'd, that ſcarce himſelf he knew.
A ſudden thought then ſtarting in his mind,
Since I in Arcite cannot Arcite find,
The world may ſearch in vain with all their eyes,
But never penetrate through this diſguiſe.
Thanks to the change which grief and ſickneſs give,
In low eſtate I may ſecurely live,
And ſee unknown my miſtreſs day by day.
He ſaid; and cloth'd himſelf in coarſe array:
A labouring hind in ſhew; then forth he went,
And to th' Athenian towers his journey bent:
One ſquire attended in the ſame diſguiſe,
Made conſcious of his maſter's enterpriſe.
Arriv'd at Athens ſoon he came to court,
Unknown, unqueſtion'd, in that thick reſort:
Proffering for hire his ſervice at the gate,
To drudge, draw water, and to run or wait.
So fair befel him, that for little gain
He ſerv'd at firſt Emilia's chamberlain;

And,

And, watchful all advantages to ſpy,
Was ſtill at hand, and in his maſter's eye;
And as his bones were big, and ſinews ſtrong,
Refus'd no toil that could to ſlaves belong;
But from deep wells with engines water drew,
And us'd his noble hands the wood to hew.
He paſs'd a year at leaſt attending thus
On Emily, and call'd Philoſtratus.
But never was there man of his degree
So much eſteem'd, ſo well belov'd as he.
So gentle of condition was he known,
That through the court his courteſy was blown:
All think him worthy of a greater place,
And recommend him to the royal grace:
That, exercis'd within a higher ſphere,
His virtues more conſpicuous might appear.
Thus by the general voice was Arcite prais'd,
And by great Theſeus to high favour rais'd:
Among his menial ſervants firſt enroll'd,
And largely entertain'd with ſums of gold:
Beſides what ſecretly from Thebes was ſent,
Of his own income, and his annual rent:
This well employ'd, he purchas'd friends and fame,
But cautiouſly conceal'd from whence it came.
Thus for three years he liv'd with large increaſe,
In arms of honour, and eſteem in peace;
To Theſeus' perſon he was ever near;
And Theſeus for his virtues held him dear.

PALAMON AND ARCITE:

OR, THE KNIGHT'S TALE.

BOOK II.

WHILE Arcite lives in bliſs, the ſtory turns
Where hopeleſs Palamon in priſon mourns.
For ſix long years immur'd, the captive knight
Had dragg'd his chains, and ſcarcely ſeen the light:
Loſt liberty, and love, at once he bore:
His priſon pain'd him much, his paſſion more:
Nor dares he hope his fetters to remove,
Nor ever wiſhes to be free from love.
But when the ſixth revolving year was run,
And May within the Twins receiv'd the ſun,
Were it by chance, or forceful deſtiny,
Which forms in cauſes firſt whate'er ſhall be,
Aſſiſted by a friend, one moonleſs night,
This Palamon from priſon took his flight:
A pleaſant beverage he prepar'd before
Of wine and honey mix'd with added ſtore
Of opium; to his keeper this he brought,
Who ſwallow'd unaware the ſleepy draught,
And ſnor'd ſecure till morn, his ſenſes bound
In ſlumber, and in long oblivion drown'd.
Short was the night, and careful Palamon
Sought the next covert ere the riſing ſun.
A thick ſpread foreſt near the city lay,
To this with lengthen'd ſtrides he took his way
(For far he could not fly, and fear'd the day).

Safe

Safe from purſuit, he meant to ſhun the light,
Till the brown ſhadows of the friendly night
To Thebes might favour his intended flight.
When to his country come, his next deſign
Was all the Theban race in arms to join,
And war on Theſeus, till he loſt his life,
Or won the beauteous Emily to wife.
Thus while his thoughts the lingering day beguile,
To gentle Arcite let us turn our ſtile;
Who little dreamt how nigh he was to care,
Till treacherous fortune caught him in the ſnare.
The morning-lark, the meſſenger of day,
Saluted in her ſong the morning gray;
And ſoon the ſun aroſe with beams ſo bright,
That all th' horizon laugh'd to ſee the joyous ſight;
He with his tepid rays the roſe renews,
And licks the drooping leaves, and dries the dews;
When Arcite left his bed, reſolv'd to pay
Obſervance to the month of merry May:
Forth on his fiery ſteed betimes he rode,
That ſcarcely prints the turf on which he trod:
At eaſe he ſeem'd, and, prancing o'er the plains,
Turn'd only to the grove his horſe's reins,
The grove I nam'd before; and, lighted there,
A woodbine garland ſought to crown his hair;
Then turn'd his face againſt the riſing day,
And rais'd his voice to welcome in the May.

For thee, ſweet month, the groves green liveries wear,
If not the firſt, the faireſt of the year:

For

For thee the Graces lead the dancing hours,
And Nature's ready pencil paints the flowers:
When thy ſhort reign is paſt, the feverish ſun
The ſultry tropic fears, and moves more ſlowly on.
So may thy tender bloſſoms fear no blight,
Nor goats with venom'd teeth thy tendrils bite,
As thou ſhalt guide my wandering feet to find
The fragrant greens I ſeek, my brows to bind.
His vows addreſs'd, within the grove he ſtray'd,
Till fate, or fortune, near the place convey'd
His ſteps where ſecret Palamon was laid.
Full little thought of him the gentle knight,
Who flying death had there conceal'd his flight,
In brakes and brambles hid, and ſhunning mortal ſight:
And leſs he knew him for his hated foe,
But fear'd him as a man he did not know.
But as it has been ſaid of ancient years,
That fields are full of eyes, and woods have ears;
For this the wiſe are ever on their guard,
For, unforeſeen, they ſay, is unprepar'd.
Uncautious Arcite thought himſelf alone,
And leſs than all ſuſpected Palamon,
Who liſtening heard him, while he ſearch'd the grove,
And loudly ſung his roundelay of love:
But on the ſudden ſtopp'd, and ſilent ſtood,
As lovers often muſe, and change their mood;
Now high as heaven, and then as low as hell;
Now up, now down, as buckets in a well:

For Venus, like her day, will change her cheer,
And ſeldom ſhall we ſee a Friday clear.
Thus Arcite, having ſung, with alter'd hue
Sunk on the ground, and from his boſom drew
A deſperate ſigh, accuſing heaven and fate,
And angry Juno's unrelenting hate.
Curs'd be the day when firſt I did appear;
Let it be blotted from the calendar,
Leſt it pollute the month, and poiſon all the year.
Still will the jealous Queen purſue our race?
Cadmus is dead, the Theban city was:
Yet ceaſes not her hate: for all who come
From Cadmus are involv'd in Cadmus' doom.
I ſuffer for my blood: unjuſt decree!
That puniſhes another's crime on me.
In mean eſtate I ſerve my mortal foe,
The man who caus'd my country's overthrow.
This is not all; for Juno, to my ſhame,
Has forc'd me to forſake my former name;
Arcite I was, Philoſtratus I am.
That ſide of heaven is all my enemy:
Mars ruin'd Thebes: his mother ruin'd me.
Of all the royal race remains but one
Beſides myſelf, th' unhappy Palamon,
Whom Theſeus holds in bonds, and will not free;
Without a crime, except his kin to me.
Yet theſe, and all the reſt, I could endure;
But Love 's a malady without a cure;
Fierce Love has pierc'd me with his fiery dart,
He fires within, and hiſſes at my heart.

Your

Your eyes, fair Emily, my fate purſue;
I ſuffer for the reſt, I die for you.
Of ſuch a Goddeſs no time leaves record,
Who burn'd the temple where ſhe was ador'd:
And let it burn, I never will complain,
Pleas'd with my ſufferings, if you knew my pain.
At this a ſickly qualm his heart aſſail'd,
His ears ring inward, and his ſenſes fail'd.
No word miſs'd Palamon of all he ſpoke,
But ſoon to deadly pale he chang'd his look:
He trembled every limb, and felt a ſmart,
As if cold ſteel had glided through his heart;
No longer ſtaid, but, ſtarting from his place,
Diſcover'd ſtood, and ſhew'd his hoſtile face:
Falſe traitor Arcite, traitor to thy blood,
Bound by thy ſacred oath to ſeek my good,
Now art thou found foreſworn, for Emily;
And dar'ſt attempt her love, for whom I die.
So haſt thou cheated Theſeus with a wile,
Againſt thy vow, returning to beguile
Under a borrow'd name: as falſe to me,
So falſe thou art to him who ſet thee free:
But reſt aſſur'd, that either thou ſhalt die,
Or elſe renounce thy claim in Emily:
For, though unarm'd I am, and (free'd by chance)
Am here without my ſword, or pointed launce:
Hope not, baſe man, unqueſtion'd hence to go,
For I am Palamon, thy mortal foe.
Arcite, who heard his tale, and knew the man,
His ſword unſheath'd, and fiercely thus began:

Now by the Gods who govern heaven above,
Wert thou not weak with hunger, mad with love,
That word had been thy laſt, or in this grove
This hand ſhould force thee to renounce thy love.
The ſurety which I gave thee, I defy:
Fool, not to know that love endures no tie,
And Jove but laughs at lovers perjury.
Know I will ſerve the fair in thy deſpight;
But ſince thou art my kinſman, and a knight,
Here, have my faith, to-morrow in this grove
Our arms ſhall plead the titles of our love:
And Heaven ſo help my right, as I alone
Will come, and keep the cauſe and quarrel both unknown;
With arms of proof both for myſelf and thee;
Chuſe thou the beſt, and leave the worſt to me.
And, that a better eaſe thou may'ſt abide,
Bedding and cloaths I will this night provide,
And needful ſuſtenance, that thou may'ſt be
A conqueſt better won, and worthy me:
His promiſe Palamon accepts; but pray'd,
To keep it better than the firſt he made.
Thus fair they parted till the morrow's dawn,
For each had laid his plighted faith to pawn.
Oh Love! thou ſternly doſt thy power maintain,
And wilt not bear a rival in thy reign,
Tyrants and thou all fellowſhip diſdain.
This was in Arcite prov'd, and Palamon;
Both in deſpair, yet each would love alone.
Arcite return'd, and, as in honour ty'd,
His foe with bedding and with food ſupply'd;

Then, ere the day, two ſuits of armour ſought,
Which borne before him on his ſteed he brought:
Both were of ſhining ſteel, and wrought ſo pure,
As might the ſtrokes of two ſuch arms endure.
Now, at the time, and in th' appointed place,
The challenger and challeng'd, face to face,
Approach; each other from afar they knew,
And from afar their hatred chang'd their hue.
So ſtands the Thracian herdſman with his ſpear,
Full in the gap, and hopes the hunted bear,
And hears him ruſtling in the wood, and ſees
His courſe at diſtance by the bending trees;
And thinks, here comes my mortal enemy,
And either he muſt fall in fight, or I:
This while he thinks, he lifts aloft his dart;
A generous chilneſs ſeizes every part:
The veins pour back the blood, and fortify the heart.
Thus pale they meet; their eyes with fury burn;
None greets; for none the greeting will return:
But in dumb ſurlineſs, each arm'd with care
His foe profeſt, as brother of the war:
Then both, no moment loſt, at once advance
Againſt each other, arm'd with ſword and lance:
They laſh, they foin, they paſs, they ſtrive to bore
Their corſlets, and the thinneſt parts explore.
Thus two long hours in equal arms they ſtood,
And wounded, wound; till both were bath'd in blood;
And not a foot of ground had either got,
As if the world depended on the ſpot.

Fell

Fell Arcite like an angry tiger far'd,
And like a lion Palamon appear'd:
Or as two boars whom love to battle draws,
With riſing briſtles, and with frothy jaws,
Their adverſe breaſts with tuſks oblique they wound;
With grunts and groans the foreſt rings around.
So fought the knights, and fighting muſt abide,
Till fate an umpire ſends their difference to decide.
The power that miniſters to God's decrees,
And executes on earth what heaven foreſees,
Call'd providence, or chance, or fatal ſway,
Comes with reſiſtleſs force, and finds or makes her way.
Nor kings, nor nations, nor united power,
One moment can retard th' appointed hour.
And ſome one day, ſome wondrous chance appears,
Which happen'd not in centuries of years:
For ſure, whate'er we mortals hate, or love,
Or hope, or fear, depends on powers above;
They move our appetites to good or ill,
And by foreſight neceſſitate the will.
In Theſeus this appears; whoſe youthful joy
Was beaſts of chace in foreſts to deſtroy,
This gentle knight, inſpir'd by jolly May,
Forſook his eaſy couch at early day,
And to the wood and wilds purſued his way.
Beſide him rode Hippolita the queen,
And Emily attir'd in lively green,
With horns, and hounds, and all the tuneful cry,
To hunt a royal hart within the covert nigh:

And as he follow'd Mars before, ſo now
He ſerves the goddeſs of the ſilver bow.
The way that Theſeus took was to the wood
Where the two knights in cruel battle ſtood:
The lawn on which they fought, th' appointed place
In which th' uncoupled hounds began the chace.
Thither forth-right he rode to rouſe the prey,
That ſhaded by the fern in harbour lay;
And, thence diſlodg'd, was wont to leave the wood,
For open fields, and croſs the cryſtal flood.
Approach'd, and looking underneath the ſun,
He ſaw proud Arcite, and fierce Palamon,
In mortal battle doubling blow on blow,
Like lightning flam'd their faulchions to and fro,
And ſhot a dreadful gleam; ſo ſtrong they ſtrook,
There ſeem'd leſs force requir'd to fell an oak:
He gaz'd with wonder on their equal might,
Look'd eager on, but knew not either knight:
Reſolv'd to learn, he ſpurr'd his fiery ſteed
With goring rowels to provoke his ſpeed.
The minute ended that began the race,
So ſoon he was betwixt them on the place;
And with his ſword unſheath'd, on pain of life
Commands both combatants to ceaſe their ſtrife:
Then with imperious tone purſues his threat;
What are you? why in arms together met?
How dares your pride preſume againſt my laws,
As in a liſted field to fight your cauſe?
Unaſk'd the royal grant; no marſhal by,
As knightly rites require; nor judge to try?

Then Palamon, with ſcarce recover'd breath,
Thus haſty ſpoke: We both deſerve the death,
And both would die; for look the world around,
A pair ſo wretched is not to be found,
Our life 's a load; encumber'd with the charge,
We long to ſet th' impriſon'd ſoul at large.
Now as thou art a ſovereign judge, decree
The rightful doom of death to him and me,
Let neither find thy grace; for grace is cruelty.
Me firſt, O kill me firſt; and cure my woe;
Then ſheath the ſword of juſtice on my foe:
Or kill him firſt; for when his name is heard,
He foremoſt will receive his due reward.
Arcite of Thebes is he; thy mortal foe:
On whom thy grace did liberty beſtow;
But firſt contracted, that if ever found
By day or night upon th' Athenian ground,
His head ſhould pay the forfeit; ſee return'd
The perjur'd knight, his oath and honour ſcorn'd.
For this is he, who, with a borrow'd name
And proffer'd ſervice, to thy palace came,
Now call'd Philoſtratus: retain'd by thee,
A traitor truſted, and in high degree,
Aſpiring to the bed of beauteous Emily.
My part remains; from Thebes my birth I own,
And call myſelf th' unhappy Palamon.
Think me not like that man; ſince no diſgrace
Can force me to renounce the honour of my race.
Know me for what I am: I broke my chain,
Nor promis'd I thy priſoner to remain:

The love of liberty with life is given,
And life itſelf th' inferior gift of Heaven.
Thus without crime I fled; but farther know,
I with this Arcite am thy mortal foe:
Then give me death, ſince I thy life purſue;
For ſafeguard of thyſelf, death is my due.
More wouldſt thou know? I love bright Emily,
And for her ſake and in her ſight will die:
But kill my rival too; for he no leſs
Deſerves; and I thy righteous doom will bleſs,
Aſſur'd that what I loſe, he never ſhall poſſeſs.
To this reply'd the ſtern Athenian prince,
And ſourly ſmil'd, In owning your offence,
You judge yourſelf; and I but keep record
In place of law, while you pronounce the word.
Take your deſert, the death you have decreed;
I ſeal your doom, and ratify the deed:
By Mars, the patron of my arms, you die.
He ſaid; dumb ſorrow ſeiz'd the ſtanders-by.
The queen above the reſt, by nature good,
(The pattern form'd of perfect womanhood)
For tender pity wept: when ſhe began,
Through the bright quire th' infectious virtue ran.
All dropt their tears, ev'n the contended maid:
And thus among themſelves they ſoftly ſaid:
What eyes can ſuffer this unworthy ſight!
Two youths of royal blood, renown'd in fight,
The maſterſhip of heaven in face and mind,
And lovers, far beyond their faithleſs kind:

See their wide ſtreaming wounds; they neither came
For pride of empire, nor deſire of fame:
Kings fight for kingdoms, madmen for applauſe:
But love for love alone; that crowns the lover's cauſe.
This thought, which ever bribes the beauteous kind,
Such pity wrought in every lady's mind,
They left their ſteeds, and proſtrate on the place,
From the fierce king, implor'd th' offenders grace.
He paus'd a while, ſtood ſilent in his mood
(For yet his rage was boiling in his blood);
But ſoon his tender mind th' impreſſion felt,
(As ſofteſt metals are not ſlow to melt
And pity ſooneſt runs in ſofteſt minds);
Then reaſons with himſelf; and firſt he finds
His paſſion caſt a miſt before his ſenſe,
And either made, or magnify'd th' offence.
Offence! of what? to whom? who judg'd the cauſe?
The priſoner freed himſelf by nature's laws:
Born free, he ſought his right: the man he freed
Was perjur'd, but his love excus'd the deed:
Thus pondering, he look'd under with his eyes,
And ſaw the women's tears, and heard their cries;
Which mov'd compaſſion more, he ſhook his head,
And ſoftly ſighing to himſelf he ſaid:
Curſe on th' unpardoning prince, whom tears can draw
To no remorſe; who rules by lions law;
And deaf to prayers, by no ſubmiſſion bow'd,
Rends all alike; the penitent, and proud:

At this, with look ſerene, he rais'd his head;
Reaſon reſum'd her place, and paſſion fled:
Then thus aloud he ſpoke: The power of love,
In earth, and ſeas, and air, and heaven above,
Rules, unreſiſted, with an awful nod;
By daily miracles declar'd a God:
He blinds the wiſe, gives eye-ſight to the blind;
And moulds and ſtamps anew the lover's mind.
Behold that Arcite, and this Palamon,
Freed from my fetters, and in ſafety gone,
What hinder'd either in their native ſoil
At eaſe to reap the harveſt of their toil;
But Love, their lord, did otherwiſe ordain,
And brought them in their own deſpite again,
To ſuffer death deſerv'd; for well they know,
'Tis in my power, and I their deadly foe;
The proverb holds, that to be wiſe and love,
Is hardly granted to the Gods above.
See how the madmen bleed: behold the gains
With which their maſter, Love, rewards their pains;
For ſeven long years, on duty every day,
Lo their obedience, and their monarch's pay:
Yet, as in duty bound, they ſerve him on;
And, aſk the fools, they think it wiſely done;
Nor eaſe, nor wealth, nor life itſelf regard,
For 'tis their maxim, Love is love's reward.
This is not all; the fair for whom they ſtrove
Nor knew before, nor could ſuſpect their love,
Nor thought, when ſhe beheld the fight from far,
Her beauty was th' occaſion of the war.

But

But ſure a general doom on man is paſt,
And all are fools and lovers, firſt or laſt:
This both by others and myſelf I know,
For I have ſerv'd their ſovereign long ago;
Oft have been caught within the winding train
Of female ſnares, and felt the lover's pain,
And learn'd how far the God can human hearts conſtrain.
To this remembrance, and the prayers of thoſe
Who for th' offending warriors interpoſe,
I give their forfeit lives; on this accord,
To do me homage as their ſovereign lord;
And as my vaſſals, to their utmoſt might,
Aſſiſt my perſon, and aſſert my right.
This freely ſworn, the knights their grace obtain'd.
Then thus the king his ſecret thoughts explain'd;
If wealth, or honour, or a royal race,
Or each, or all, may win a lady's grace,
Then either of you knights may well deſerve
A princeſs born; and ſuch is ſhe you ſerve:
For Emily is ſiſter to the crown,
And but too well to both her beauty known:
But ſhould you combat till you both were dead,
Two lovers cannot ſhare a ſingle bed:
As therefore both are equal in degree,
The lot of both be left to deſtiny.
Now hear th' award, and happy may it prove
To her, and him who beſt deſerves her love!
Depart from hence in peace, and free as air,
Search the wide world, and where you pleaſe repair;

But

But on the day when this returning ſun
To the ſame point through every ſign has run,
Then each of you his hundred knights ſhall bring,
In royal liſts, to fight before the king;
And then the knight, whom fate or happy chance
Shall with his friends to victory advance,
And grace his arms ſo far in equal fight,
From out the bars to force his oppoſite,
Or kill, or make him recreant on the plain,
The prize of valour and of love ſhall gain;
The vanquiſh'd party ſhall their claim releaſe,
And the long jars conclude in laſting peace.
The charge be mine t' adorn the choſen ground,
The theatre of war, for champions ſo renown'd;
And take the patron's place of either knight,
With eyes impartial to behold the fight;
And heaven of me ſo judge as I ſhall judge aright.
If both are ſatisfied with this accord,
Swear by the laws of knighthood on my ſword.
Who now but Palamon exults with joy?
And raviſh'd Arcite ſeems to touch the ſky:
The whole aſſembled troop was pleas'd as well,
Extol th' award, and on their knees they fell
To bleſs the gracious king. The knights with leave
Departing from the place, his laſt commands receive;
On Emily with equal ardour look,
And from her eyes their inſpiration took.
From thence to Thebes' old walls purſue their way,
Each to provide his champions for the day.

It might be deem'd, on our hiſtorian's part,
Or too much negligence, or want of art,
If he forgot the vaſt magnificence
Of royal Theſeus, and his large expence.
He firſt inclos'd for liſts a level ground,
The whole circumference a mile around;
The form was circular; and all without
A trench was ſunk, to moat the place about.
Within an amphitheatre appear'd,
Rais'd in degrees; to ſixty paces rear'd:
That when a man was plac'd in one degree,
Height was allow'd for him above to ſee.
Eaſtward was built a gate of marble white;
The like adorn'd the weſtern oppoſite.
A nobler object than this fabric was,
Rome never ſaw; nor of ſo vaſt a ſpace:
For, rich with ſpoils of many a conquer'd land,
All arts and artiſts Theſeus could command;
Who ſold for hire, or wrought for better fame;
The maſter-painters and the carvers came.
So roſe within the compaſs of the year
An age's work, a glorious theatre.
Then o'er its eaſtern gate was rais'd above
A temple, ſacred to the queen of love;
An altar ſtood below: on either hand
A prieſt with roſes crown'd, who held a myrtle wand.
The dome of Mars was on the gate oppos'd,
And on the north a turret was inclos'd,
Within the wall of alabaſter white,
And crimſon coral for the queen of night,
Who takes in ſylvan ſports her chaſte delight.

Within

Within theſe oratories might you ſee
Rich carvings, pourtraitures, and imagery:
Where every figure to the life expreſs'd
The godhead's power to whom it was addreſs'd.
In Venus' temple on the ſides were ſeen
The broken ſlumbers of enamour'd men,
Prayers that even ſpoke, and pity ſeem'd to call,
And iſſuing ſighs that ſmok'd along the wall.
Complaints, and hot deſires, the lover's hell,
And ſcalding tears that wore a channel where they fell:
And all around where nuptial bonds, the ties,
Of love's aſſurance, and a train of lies,
That, made in luſt, conclude in perjuries.
Beauty, and youth, and wealth, and luxury,
And ſpritely hope, and ſhort-enduring joy;
And ſorceries to raiſe th' infernal powers,
And ſigils fram'd in planetary hours:
Expence, and after-thought, and idle care,
And doubts of motley hue, and dark deſpair;
Suſpicions, and fantaſtical ſurmiſe,
And jealouſy ſuffus'd, with jaundice in her eyes,
Diſcolouring all ſhe view'd, in tawny dreſs'd;
Down-look'd, and with a cuckow on her fiſt.
Oppos'd to her, on t' other ſide advance
The coſtly feaſt, the carol, and the dance,
Minſtrels, and muſic, poetry, and play,
And balls by night, and tournaments by day.
All theſe were painted on the wall, and more:
With acts and monuments of times before:

And

And others added by prophetic doom,
And lovers yet unborn, and loves to come:
For there th' Idalian mount, and Citheron,
The court of Venus was in colours drawn:
Before the palace-gate, in careleſs dreſs,
And looſe array, ſat portreſs Idleneſs:
There, by the fount, Narciſſus pin'd alone;
There Samſon was; with wiſer Solomon,
And all the mighty names by Love undone.
Medea's charms were there, Circean feaſts,
With bowls that turn'd enamour'd youths to beaſts,
Here might be ſeen, that beauty, wealth, and wit,
And proweſs, to the power of love ſubmit:
The ſpreading ſnare for all mankind is laid;
And lovers all betray, and are betray'd.
The Goddeſs' ſelf ſome noble hand had wrought;
Smiling ſhe ſeem'd, and full of pleaſing thought:
From ocean as ſhe firſt began to riſe,
And ſmooth'd the ruffled ſeas and clear'd the ſkies;
She trod the brine all bare below the breaſt,
And the green waves but ill conceal'd the reſt;
A lute ſhe held; and on her head was ſeen
A wreath of roſes red, and myrtles green;
Her turtles fann'd the buxom air above;
And, by his mother, ſtood an infant Love,
With wings unfledg'd; his eyes were banded o'er;
His hands a bow, his back a quiver bore,
Supply'd with arrows bright and keen, a deadly ſtore.
But in the dome of mighty Mars the red
With different figures all the ſides were ſpread;

This

This temple, leſs in form, with equal grace,
Was imitative of the firſt in Thrace:
For that cold region was the lov'd abode,
And ſovereign manſion of the warrior god.
The landſcape was a foreſt wide and bare;
Where neither beaſt, nor human kind repair;
The fowl, that ſcent afar, the borders fly,
And ſhun the bitter blaſt, and wheel about the ſky.
A cake of ſcurf lies baking on the ground,
And prickly ſtubs, inſtead of trees, are found;
Or woods with knots and knares deform'd and old;
Headleſs the moſt, and hideous to behold:
A rattling tempeſt through the branches went,
That ſtripp'd them bare, and one ſole way they bent.
Heaven froze above, ſevere, the clouds congeal,
And through the chryſtal vault appear'd the ſtanding hail,
Such was the face without; a mountain ſtood
Threatening from high, and overlook'd the wood:
Beneath the lowring brow, and on a bent,
The temple ſtood of Mars armipotent:
The frame of burniſh'd ſteel, that caſt a glare
From far, and ſeem'd to thaw the freezing air.
A ſtrait long entry to the temple led,
Blind with high walls; and horror over head:
Thence iſſued ſuch a blaſt, and hollow roar,
As threaten'd from the hinge to heave the door;
In through that door, a northern light there ſhone;
'Twas all it had, for windows there were none,

The

The gate was adamant; eternal frame!
Which, hew'd by Mars himſelf, from Indian quarries came,
The labour of a God; and all along
Tough iron plates were clench'd to make it ſtrong.
A tun about was every pillar there;
A poliſh'd mirror ſhone not half ſo clear.
There ſaw I how the ſecret felon wrought,
And treaſon labouring in the traitor's thought:
And midwife Time the ripen'd plot to murder brought.
There the red anger dar'd the pallid fear;
Next ſtood hypocriſy, with holy leer;
Soft ſmiling, and demurely looking down,
But hid the dagger underneath the gown:
Th' aſſaſſinating wife, the houſhold fiend;
And far the blackeſt there, the traitor-friend.
On t' other ſide there ſtood deſtruction bare;
Unpuniſh'd rapine, and a waſte of war.
Conteſt, with ſharpen'd knives, in cloiſters drawn,
And all with blood beſpread the holy lawn.
Loud menaces were heard, and foul diſgrace,
And bawling infamy, in language baſe;
Till ſenſe was loſt in ſound, and ſilence fled the place.
The ſlayer of himſelf yet ſaw I there,
The gore congeal'd was clotted in his hair:
With eyes half cloſ'd, and gaping mouth he lay,
And grim, as when he breath'd his ſullen ſoul away.
In midſt of all the dome, misfortune ſate,
And gloomy diſcontent, and fell debate,

And

And madneſs laughing in his ireful mood;
And arm'd complaint on theft; and cries of blood.
There was the murder'd corpſe, in covert laid,
And violent death in thouſand ſhapes diſplay'd:
The city to the ſoldier's rage reſign'd:
Succeſsleſs wars, and poverty behind:
Ships burnt in fight, or forc'd on rocky ſhores,
And the raſh hunter ſtrangled by the boars:
The new-born babe by nurſes overlaid;
And the cook caught within the raging fire he made.
All iſſs of Mars's nature, flame and ſteel;
The gaſping charioteer, beneath the wheel
Of his own car; the ruin'd houſe that falls
And intercepts her lord betwixt the walls:
The whole diviſion that to Mars pertains,
All trades of death that deal in ſteel for gains,
Were there: the butcher, armourer, and ſmith,
Who forges ſharpen'd faulchions, or the ſcythe.
The ſcarlet conqueſt on a tower was plac'd,
With ſhouts, and ſoldiers acclamations grac'd:
A pointed ſword hung threatening o'er his head,
Suſtain'd but by a ſlender twine of thread.
There ſaw I Mars's ides, the capitol,
The ſeer in vain foretelling Cæſar's fall;
The laſt triumvirs, and the wars they move,
And Anthony, who loſt the world for love.
Theſe, and a thouſand more, the fane adorn;
Their fates were painted ere the men were born,
All copied from the heavens, and ruling force
Of the red ſtar, in his revolving courſe.

The

The form of Mars high on a chariot ſtood,
All ſheath'd in arms, and gruffly look'd the God:
Two geomantic figures were diſplay'd
Above his head, a warrior and a maid;
One when direct, and one when retrograde.
Tir'd with deformities of death, I haſte
To the third temple of Diana chaſte.
A ſylvan ſcene with various greens was drawn,
Shades on the ſides, and on the midſt a lawn:
The ſilver Cynthia, with her nymphs around,
Purſued the flying deer, the woods with horns reſound:
Califto there ſtood manifeſt of ſhame,
And, turn'd a bear, the northern ſtar became:
Her ſon was next, and by peculiar grace
In the cold circle held the ſecond place:
The ſtag Acteon in the ſtream had ſpy'd
The naked huntreſs, and, for ſeeing, dy'd:
His hounds, unknowing of his change, purſue
The chace, and their miſtaken maſter ſlew.
Penelan Daphne too was there to ſee,
Apollo's love before, and now his tree:
Th' adjoining fane th' aſſembled Greeks expreſs'd,
And hunting of the Caledonian beaſt.
Oenides' valour, and his envy'd prize;
The fatal power of Atalanta's eyes;
Diana's vengeance on the victor ſhown,
The murdreſs mother; and conſuming ſon;
The Volſcian queen extended on the plain;
The treaſon puniſh'd, and the traitor ſlain.

The reſt were various huntings, well deſign'd,
And ſavage beaſts deſtroy'd, of every kind.
The graceful goddeſs was array'd in green;
About her feet were little beagles ſeen,
That watch'd with upward eyes the motions of their queen.
Her legs were buſkin'd, and the left before;
In act to ſhoot, a ſilver bow ſhe bore,
And at her back a painted quiver wore.
She trod a wexing moon, that ſoon would wane,
And drinking borrow'd light, be fill'd again:
With downcaſt eyes, as ſeeming to ſurvey
The dark dominions, her alternate ſway.
Before her ſtood a woman in her throes,
And call'd Lucina's aid, her burden to diſcloſe.
All theſe the painter drew with ſuch command,
That Nature ſnatch'd the pencil from his hand,
Aſham'd and angry that his art could feign
And mend the tortures of a mother's pain.
Theſeus beheld the fanes of every God,
And thought his mighty coſt was well beſtow'd.
So princes now their poets ſhould regard;
But few can write, and fewer can reward.
The theatre thus rais'd, the liſts enclos'd,
And all with vaſt magnificence diſpos'd,
We leave the monarch pleas'd, and haſte to bring
The knights to combat; and their arms to ſing.

PALA-

PALAMON AND ARCITE:

OR, THE KNIGHT'S TALE.

BOOK III.

THE day approach'd when Fortune ſhould decide
Th' important enterprize, and give the bride;
For now, the rivals round the world had ſought,
And each his rival, well appointed, brought.
The nations, far and near, contend in choice,
And ſend the flower of war by public voice;
That after, or before, were never known
Such chiefs, as each an army ſeem'd alone:
Beſide the champions: all of high degree,
Who knighthood lov'd, and deeds of chivalry,
Throng'd to the liſts, and envy'd to behold
The names of others, not their own, enroll'd.
Nor ſeems it ſtrange; for every noble knight
Who loves the fair, and is endued with might,
In ſuch a quarrel would be proud to fight.
There breathes not ſcarce a man on Britiſh ground
(An iſle for love and arms of old renown'd)
But would have ſold his life to purchaſe fame,
To Palamon or Arcite ſent his name:
And had the land ſelected of the beſt,
Half had come hence, and let the world provide the reſt.
A hundred knights with Palamon there came,
Approv'd in fight, and men of mighty name;

38823

Their arms were ſeveral, as their nations were,
But furniſh'd all alike with ſword and ſpear.
Some wore coat armour, imitating ſcale;
And next their ſkins were ſtubborn ſhirts of mail.
Some wore a breaſt-plate and a light juppon,
Their horſes cloth'd with rich capariſon:
Some for defence would leathern bucklers uſe,
Of folded hides; and others ſhields of pruce.
One hung a pole-axe at his ſaddle-bow,
And one a heavy mace to ſhun the foe;
One for his legs and knees provided well,
With jambeux arm'd, and double plates of ſteel:
This on his helmet wore a lady's glove,
And that a ſleeve embroider'd by his love.
With Palamon above the reſt in place,
Lycurgus came, the ſurly king of Thrace;
Black was his beard, and manly was his face;
The balls of his broad eyes roll'd in his head,
And glar'd betwixt a yellow and a red:
He look'd a lion with a gloomy ſtare,
And o'er his eye-brows hung his matted hair:
Big-bon'd, and large of limbs, with ſinews ſtrong,
Broad-ſhoulder'd, and his arms were round and long.
Four milk-white bulls (the Thracian uſe of old)
Were yok'd to draw his car of burniſh'd gold.
Upright he ſtood, and bore aloft his ſhield,
Conſpicuous from afar, and overlook'd the field.
His ſurcoat was a bear-ſkin on his back;
His hair hung long behind, and gloſſy raven black.

His

His ample forehead bore a coronet
With ſparkling diamonds and with rubies ſet:
Ten brace, and more, of greyhounds, ſnowy fair,
And tall as ſtags, ran looſe, and cours'd around his chair,
A match for pards in flight, in grappling for the bear:
With golden muzzles all their mouths were bound,
And collars of the ſame their necks ſurround.
Thus through the fields Lycurgus took his way;
His hundred knights attend in pomp and proud array.
To match this monarch, with ſtrong Arcite came
Emetrius king of Inde, a mighty name,
On a bay courſer, goodly to behold
The trappings of his horſe adorn'd with barbarous gold.
Not Mars beſtrode a ſteed with greater grace;
His ſurcoat o'er his arms was cloth of Thrace,
Adorn'd with pearls, all orient, round, and great;
His ſaddle was of gold, with emeralds ſet.
His ſhoulders large a mantle did attire,
With rubies thick, and ſparkling as the fire:
His amber-colour'd locks in ringlets run,
With graceful negligence, and ſhone againſt the ſun.
His noſe was aquiline, his eyes were blue,
Ruddy his lips, and freſh and fair his hue:
Some ſprinkled freckles on his face were ſeen,
Whoſe duſk ſet off the whiteneſs of the ſkin:
His awful preſence did the croud ſurprize,
Nor durſt the raſh ſpectator meet his eyes,
Eyes that confeſs'd him born for kingly ſway,
So fierce, they flaſh'd intolerable day.

His age in nature's youthful prime appear'd,
And juſt began to bloom his yellow beard.
Whene'er he ſpoke, his voice was heard around,
Loud as a trumpet, with a ſilver ſound,
A laurel wreath'd his temples, freſh and green;
And myrtle ſprigs, the marks of love, were mix'd between.
Upon his fiſt he bore, for his delight,
An eagle well reclaim'd, and lily white.
His hundred knights attend him to the war,
All arm'd for battle; ſave their heads were bare.
Words and devices blaz'd on every ſhield,
And pleaſing was the terror of the field.
For kings, and dukes, and barons, you might ſee,
Like ſparkling ſtars, though different in degree,
All for th' increaſe of arms, and love of chivalry.
Before the king tame leopards led the way,
And troops of lions innocently play.
So Bacchus through the conquer'd Indies rode,
And beaſts in gambols friſk'd before the honeſt god.
In this array the war of either ſide
Through Athens paſs'd with military pride.
At prime, they enter'd on the Sunday morn;
Rich tapeſtry ſpread the ſtreets, and flowers the poſts adorn.
The town was all a jubilee of feaſts;
So Theſeus will'd, in honour of his gueſts:
Himſelf with open arms the king embrac'd,
Then all the reſt in their degrees were grac'd.

No harbinger was needful for a night,
For every houſe was proud to lodge a knight.
I paſs the royal treat, nor muſt relate
The gifts beſtow'd, nor how the champions ſate;
Who firſt, or laſt, or how the knights addreſs'd
Their vows, or who was faireſt at the feaſt;
Whoſe voice, whoſe graceful dance did moſt ſurprize;
Soft amorous ſighs, and ſilent love of eyes.
The rivals call my Muſe another way,
To ſing their vigils for th' enſuing day.
'Twas ebbing darkneſs, paſt the noon of night:
And Phoſpher, on the confines of the light,
Promis'd the ſun, ere day began to ſpring;
The tuneful lark already ſtretch'd her wing,
And, flickering on her neſt, made ſhort eſſays to ſing.
When wakeful Palamon, preventing day,
Took, to the royal liſts, his early way,
To Venus at her fane, in her own houſe, to pray.
There, falling on his knees before her ſhrine,
He thus implor'd with prayers her power divine.
Creator Venus, genial power of love,
The bliſs of men below, and Gods above!
Beneath the ſliding ſun thou runn'ſt thy race,
Doſt faireſt ſhine, and beſt become thy place.
For thee the winds their eaſtern blaſts forbear,
Thy month reveals the ſpring, and opens all the year.
Thee, Goddeſs, thee the ſtorms of winter fly,
Earth ſmiles with flowers renewing, laughs the ſky,
And birds to lays of love their tuneful notes apply.

For thee the lion loaths the taſte of blood,
And roaring hunts his female through the wood:
For thee the bulls rebellow through the groves,
And tempt the ſtream, and ſnuff their abſent loves.
'Tis thine, whate'er is pleaſant, good, or fair:
All nature is thy province, life thy care:
Thou mad'ſt the world, and doſt the world repair.
Thou gladder of the mount of Cytheron,
Increaſe of Jove, companion of the ſun;
If e'er Adonis touch'd thy tender heart,
Have pity, Goddeſs, for thou know'ſt the ſmart.
Alas! I have not words to tell my grief;
To vent my ſorrow, would be ſome relief;
Light ſufferings give us leiſure to complain;
We groan, but cannot ſpeak, in greater pain.
O Goddeſs, tell thyſelf what I would ſay,
Thou know'ſt it, and I feel too much to pray.
So grant my ſuit, as I enforce my might;
In love to be thy champion, and thy knight;
A ſervant to thy ſex, a ſlave to thee,
A foe profeſt to barren chaſtity.
Nor aſk I fame or honour of the field,
Nor chooſe I more to vanquiſh than to yield:
In my divine Emilia make me bleſt,
Let fate, or partial chance, diſpoſe the reſt:
Find thou the manner, and the means prepare;
Poſſeſſion, more than conqueſt, is my care.
Mars is the warrior's god; in him it lies,
On whom he favours to confer the prize;

With

With ſmiling aſpect you ſerenely move
In your fifth orb, and rule the realm of love.
The fates but only ſpin the coarſer clue,
The fineſt of the wool is left for you.
Spare me but one ſmall portion of the twine,
And let the ſiſters cut below your line:
The reſt among the rubbiſh may they ſweep,
Or add it to the yarn of ſome old miſer's heap.
But, if you this ambitious prayer deny,
(A wiſh, I grant, beyond mortality,)
Then let me ſink beneath proud Arcite's arms,
And, I once dead, let him poſſeſs her charms.
Thus ended he; then, with obſervance due,
The ſacred incenſe on her altar threw:
The curling ſmoke mounts heavy from the fires;
At length it catches flame, and in a blaze expires;
At once the gracious Goddeſs gave the ſign,
Her ſtatue ſhook, and trembled all the ſhrine:
Pleas'd Palamon the tardy omen took:
For, ſince the flames purſued the trailing ſmoke,
He knew his boon was granted; but the day
To diſtance driven, and joy adjourn'd with long delay.
Now morn with roſy light had ſtreak'd the ſky,
Up roſe the ſun, and up roſe Emily;
Addreſs'd her early ſteps to Cynthia's fane,
In ſtate attended by her maiden train,
Who bore the veſts that holy rites require,
Incenſe, and odorous gums, and cover'd fire.
The plenteous horns with pleaſant mead they crown,
Nor wanted aught beſides in honour of the moon.

Now

Now while the temple ſmoak'd with hallow'd ſteam,
They waſh the virgin in a living ſtream;
The ſecret ceremonies I conceal,
Uncouth, perhaps unlawful, to reveal:
But ſuch they were as pagan uſe requir'd,
Perform'd by women when the men retir'd,
Whoſe eyes profane their chaſte myſterious rites
Might turn to ſcandal, or obſcene delights.
Well-meaners think no harm; but for the reſt,
Things ſacred they pervert, and ſilence is the beſt.
Her ſhining hair, uncomb'd, was looſely ſpread,
A crown of maſtleſs oak adorn'd her head:
When to the ſhrine approach'd, the ſpotleſs maid
Had kindling fires on either altar laid
(The rites were ſuch as were obſerv'd of old,
By Statius in his Theban ſtory told).
Then kneeling with her hands acroſs her breaſt,
Thus lowly ſhe preferr'd her chaſte requeſt.
O Goddeſs, haunter of the woodland green,
To whom both heaven and earth and ſeas are ſeen;
Queen of the nether ſkies, where half the year
Thy ſilver beams deſcend, and light the gloomy ſphere;
Goddeſs of maids, and conſcious of our hearts,
So keep me from the vengeance of thy darts,
Which Niobe's devoted iſſue felt,
When hiſſing through the ſkies the feather'd deaths were dealt;
As I deſire to live a virgin life,
Nor know the name of mother or of wife.

Thy

Thy votreſs from my tender years I am,
And love, like thee, the woods and ſylvan game.
Like death, thou know'ſt, I loath the nuptial ſtate,
And man, the tyrant of our ſex, I hate,
A lowly ſervant, but a lofty mate;
Where love is duty on the female ſide;
On their's mere ſenſual guſt, and ſought with ſurly pride.
Now by thy triple ſhape, as thou art ſeen
In heaven, earth, hell, and every where a queen,
Grant this my firſt deſire; let diſcord ceaſe,
And make betwixt the rivals laſting peace:
Quench their hot fire, or far from me remove
The flame, and turn it on ſome other love:
Or, if my frowning ſtars have ſo decreed,
That one muſt be rejected, one ſucceed,
Make him my lord, within whoſe faithful breaſt
Is fix'd my image, and who loves me beſt.
But, oh! ev'n that avert! I chuſe it not,
But take it as the leaſt unhappy lot.
A maid I am, and of thy virgin train;
Oh, let me ſtill that ſpotleſs name retain!
Frequent the foreſts, thy chaſte will obey,
And only make the beaſts of chace my prey!
The flames aſcend on either altar clear,
While thus the blameleſs maid addreſs'd her prayer.
When lo! the burning fire that ſhone ſo bright,
Flew off, all ſudden, with extinguiſh'd light,
And left one altar dark, a little ſpace;
Which turn'd ſelf-kindled, and renew'd the blaze;

The

The other victor-flame a moment ſtood,
Then fell, and lifeleſs left th' extinguiſh'd wood;
For ever loſt, th' irrevocable light
Forſook the blackening coals, and ſunk to night:
At either end it whiſtled as it flew,
And as the brands were green, ſo dropp'd the dew;
Infected as it fell with ſweat of ſanguine hue.

The maid from that ill omen turn'd her eyes,
And with loud ſhrieks and clamours rent the ſkies,
Nor knew what ſignify'd the boding ſign,
But found the powers diſpleas'd, and fear'd the wrath divine.

Then ſhook the ſacred ſhrine, and ſudden light
Sprung through the vaulted roof, and made the temple bright.

The power, behold! the power in glory ſhone,
By her bent bow and her keen arrows known;
The reſt, a huntreſs iſſuing from the wood,
Reclining on her cornel ſpear ſhe ſtood.
Then gracious thus began: Diſmiſs thy fear,
And Heaven's unchang'd decrees attentive hear:
More powerful Gods have torn thee from my ſide,
Unwilling to reſign, and doom'd a bride:
The two contending knights are weigh'd above;
One Mars protects, and one the Queen of Love:
But which the man, is in the Thunderer's breaſt;
This he pronounc'd, 'tis he who loves thee beſt.
The fire that once extinct reviv'd again,
Foreſhews the love allotted to remain:

Farewel!

Farewel! ſhe ſaid, and vaniſh'd from the place;
The ſheaf of arrows ſhook, and rattled in the caſe.
Aghaſt at this, the royal virgin ſtood,
Diſclaim'd, and now no more a ſifter of the wood:
But to the parting Goddeſs thus ſhe pray'd;
Propitious ſtill be preſent to my aid,
Nor quite abandon your once favour'd maid.
Then ſighing ſhe return'd; but ſmil'd betwixt,
With hopes and fears, and joys with ſorrows mixt.
The next returning planetary hour
Of Mars, who ſhar'd the heptarchy of power,
His ſteps bold Arcite to the temple bent,
T' adore with pagan rites the power armipotent:
Then proſtrate, low before his altar lay,
And rais'd his manly voice, and thus began to pray:
Strong God of Arms, whoſe iron ſceptre ſways
The freezing North, and Hyperborean ſeas,
And Scythian colds, and Thracia's winter coaſt,
Where ſtand thy ſteeds, and thou art honour'd moſt:
There moſt; but every-where thy power is known,
The fortune of the fight is all thy own:
Terror is thine, and wild amazement, flung
From out thy chariot, withers ev'n the ſtrong:
And diſarray and ſhameful rout enſue,
And force is added to the fainting crew.
Acknowledg'd as thou art, accept my prayer,
If aught I have atchiev'd deſerve thy care:
If to my utmoſt power with ſword and ſhield
I dar'd the death, unknowing how to yield,
And, falling in my rank, ſtill kept the field:

Then

Then let my arms prevail, by thee ſuſtain'd,
That Emily by conqueſt may be gain'd.
Have pity on my pains; nor thoſe unknown
To Mars, which, when a lover, were his own.
Venus, the public care of all above,
Thy ſtubborn heart has ſoften'd into love:
Now by her blandiſhments and powerful charms,
When yielded ſhe lay curling in thy arms,
Ev'n by thy ſhame, if ſhame it may be call'd,
When Vulcan had thee in his net inthrall'd;
O envy'd ignominy, ſweet diſgrace,
When every God that ſaw thee wiſh'd thy place!
By thoſe dear pleaſures, aid my arms in fight,
And make me conquer in my patron's right:
For I am young, a novice in the trade,
The fool of love, unpractis'd to perſuade:
And want the ſoothing arts that catch the fair,
But, caught myſelf, lie ſtruggling in the ſnare:
And ſhe I love, or laughs at all my pain,
Or knows her worth too well; and pays me with diſdain.
For ſure I am, unleſs I win in arms,
To ſtand excluded from Emilia's charms:
Nor can my ſtrength avail, unleſs by thee
Endued by force, I gain the victory;
Then for the fire which warm'd thy generous heart,
Pity thy ſubject's pains, and equal ſmart.
So be the morrow's ſweat and labour mine,
The palm and honour of the conqueſt thine:
Then ſhall the war, and ſtern debate, and ſtrife
Immortal, be the buſineſs of my life;

And

And in thy fane, the duſty ſpoils among,
High on the burniſh'd roof, my banner ſhall be hung:
Rank'd with my champion's bucklers, and below,
With arms revers'd, th' atchievements of my foe:
And while theſe limbs the vital ſpirit feeds,
While day to night, and night to day ſucceeds,
Thy ſmoking altar ſhall be fat with food
Of incenſe, and the grateful ſteam of blood;
Burnt-offerings morn and evening ſhall be thine;
And fires eternal in thy temple ſhine.
The buſh of yellow beard, this length of hair,
Which from my birth inviolate I bear,
Guiltleſs of ſteel, and from the razor free,
Shall fall a plenteous crop, reſerv'd for thee.
So may my arms with victory be bleſt,
I aſk no more; let fate diſpoſe the reſt.
The champion ceas'd; there follow'd in the cloſe
A hollow groan: a murmuring wind aroſe;
The rings of iron, that on the doors were hung,
Sent out a jarring ſound, and harſhly rung:
The bolted gates flew open at the blaſt,
The ſtorm ruſh'd in, and Arcite ſtood aghaſt:
The flames were blown aſide, yet ſhone they bright,
Fann'd by the wind, and gave a ruffled light.
Then from the ground a ſcent began to riſe,
Sweet-ſmelling as accepted ſacrifice:
This omen pleas'd, and as the flames aſpire
With odorous incenſe Arcite heaps the fire:
Nor wanted hymns to Mars, or heathen charms:
At length the nodding ſtatue claſh'd his arms,

And

And with a ſullen ſound and feeble cry,
Half ſunk, and half pronounc'd, the word of victory.
For this, with ſoul devout, he thank'd the God,
And, of ſucceſs ſecure, return'd to his abode.

Theſe vows thus granted, rais'd a ſtrife above,
Betwixt the God of War, and Queen of Love.
She granting firſt, had right of time to plead;
But he had granted too, nor would recede.
Jove was for Venus; but he fear'd his wife,
And ſeem'd unwilling to decide the ſtrife;
Till Saturn from his leaden throne aroſe,
And found a way the difference to compoſe:
Though ſparing of his grace, to miſchief bent,
He ſeldom does a good with good intent.
Wayward, but wiſe; by long experience taught
To pleaſe both parties, for ill ends, he ſought:
For this advantage age from youth has won,
As not to be outridden, though outrun.
By fortune he was now to Venus trin'd,
And with ſtern Mars in Capricorn was join'd:
Of him diſpoſing in his own abode,
He ſooth'd the Goddeſs, while he gull'd the God:
Ceaſe, daughter, to complain, and ſtint the ſtrife;
Thy Palamon ſhall have his promis'd wife:
And Mars, the lord of conqueſt, in the fight
With palm and laurel ſhall adorn his knight.
Wide is my courſe, nor turn I to my place,
Till length of time, and move with tardy pace.
Man feels me, when I preſs th' etherial plains,
My hand is heavy, and the wound remains.

Mine

Mine is the ſhipwreck, in a watery ſign;
And in an earthy, the dark dungeon mine.
Cold ſhivering agues, melancholy care,
And bitter blaſting winds, and poiſon'd air,
Are mine, and wilful death, reſulting from deſpair.
The throtling quinſey 'tis my ſtar appoints,
And rheumatiſms aſcend to rack the joints:
When churls rebel againſt their native prince,
I arm their hands, and furniſh the pretence;
And, houſing in the lion's hateful ſign,
Bought ſenates and deſerting troops are mine.
Mine is the privy poiſoning; I command
Unkindly ſeaſons, and ungrateful land.
By me king's palaces are puſh'd to ground,
And miners cruſh'd beneath their mines are found.
'Twas I ſlew Samſon, when the pillar'd hall
Fell down, and cruſh'd the many with the fall.
My looking is the fire of peſtilence,
That ſweeps at once the people and the prince.
Now weep no more, but truſt thy grandſire's art,
Mars ſhall be pleas'd, and thou perform thy part.
'Tis ill, though different your complexions are,
The family of Heaven for men ſhould war.
Th' expedient pleas'd, where neither loſt his right;
Mars had the day, and Venus had the night.
The management they left to Chronos' care;
Now turn we to th' effect, and ſing the war.
In Athens all was pleaſure, mirth, and play,
All proper to the ſpring, and ſprightly May:

Which every ſoul inſpir'd with ſuch delight,
'Twas jeſting all the day, and love at night.
Heaven ſmil'd, and gladded was the heart of man;
And Venus had the world as when it firſt began.
At length in ſleep their bodies they compoſe,
And dreamt the future fight, and early roſe.
Now ſcarce the dawning day began to ſpring,
As at a ſignal given, the ſtreets with clamours ring:
At once the crowd aroſe; confus'd and high
Evin from the heaven was heard a ſhouting cry;
For Mars was early up, and rous'd the ſky.
The Gods came downward to behold the wars,
Sharpening their ſights, and leaning from their ſtars.
The neighing of the generous horſe was heard,
For battle by the buſy groom prepar'd,
Ruſtling of harneſs, rattling of the ſhield,
Clattering of armour, furbiſh'd for the field.
Crowds to the caſtle mounted up the ſtreet,
Battering the pavement with their courſers' feet:
The greedy ſight might there devour the gold
Of glittering arms, too dazzling to behold:
And poliſh'd ſteel that caſt the view aſide,
And creſted morions, with their plumy pride.
Knights, with a long retinue of their ſquires,
In gaudy liveries march, and quaint attires.
One lac'd the helm, another held the lance:
A third the ſhining buckler did advance.
The courſer paw'd the ground with reſtleſs feet,
And ſnorting foam'd, and champ'd the golden bit.

The ſmiths and armourers on palfreys ride,
Files in their hands, and hammers at their ſide,
And nails for looſen'd ſpears, and thongs for ſhields provide.
The yeomen guard the ſtreets, in ſeemly bands;
And clowns come crowding on, with cudgels in their hands.

The trumpets, next the gate, in order plac'd,
Attend the ſign to ſound the martial blaſt;
The palace-yard is fill'd with floating tides,
And the laſt comers bear the former to the ſides.
The throng is in the midſt: the common crew
Shut out, the hall admits the better few;
In knots they ſtand, or in a rank they walk,
Serious in aſpect, earneſt in their talk:
Factious, and favouring this or t' other ſide,
As their ſtrong fancy or weak reaſon guide:
Their wagers back their wiſhes; numbers hold
With the fair freckled king, and beard of gold:
So vigorous are his eyes, ſuch rays they caſt,
So prominent his eagle's beak is plac'd.
But moſt their looks on the black monarch bend,
His riſing muſcles and his brawn commend;
His double-biting axe and beamy ſpear,
Each aſking a gigantic force to rear.
All ſpoke as partial favour mov'd the mind:
And, ſafe themſelves, at others' coſt divin'd.

Wak'd by the cries, th' Athenian chief aroſe,
The knightly forms of combat to diſpoſe;

And paſſing through th' obſequious guards, he ſate
Conſpicuous on a throne, ſublime in ſtate;
There, for the two contending knights he ſent:
Arm'd cap-a-pee, with reverence low they bent;
He ſmil'd on both, and with ſuperior look
Alike their offer'd adoration took.
The people preſs on every ſide, to ſee
Their awful prince, and hear his high decree.
Then ſigning to their heralds with his hand,
They gave his orders from their lofty ſtand.
Silence is thrice enjoin'd; then thus aloud
The king at arms beſpeaks the knights and liſtening crowd.

Our ſovereign lord has ponder'd in his mind
The means to ſpare the blood of gentle kind;
And of his grace, and inborn clemency,
He modifies his firſt ſevere decree!
The keener edge of battle to rebate,
The troops for honour fighting, not for hate.
He wills, not death ſhould terminate their ſtrife;
And wounds, if wounds enſue, be ſhort of life:
But iſſues, ere the fight, his dread command,
That ſlings afar, and poniards hand to hand,
Be baniſh'd from the field; that none ſhall dare
With ſhortned ſword to ſtab in cloſer war;
But in fair combat fight with manly ſtrength,
Nor puſh with biting point, but ſtrike at length.
The tourney is allow'd but one career,
Of the tough aſh, with the ſharp-grinded ſpear,

But knights unhors'd may riſe from off the plain,
And fight on foot their honour to regain;
Nor, if at miſchief taken, on the ground
Be ſlain, but priſoners to the pillar bound,
At either barrier plac'd; nor (captives made)
Be freed, or arm'd anew the fight invade.
The chief of either ſide, bereft of life,
Or yielded to his foe, concludes the ſtrife.
Thus dooms the lord: now valiant knights and young
Fight each his fill with ſwords and maces long.
The herald ends: the vaulted firmament
With loud acclaims and vaſt applauſe is rent:
Heaven guard a prince ſo gracious and ſo good,
So juſt, and yet ſo provident of blood!
This was the general cry. The trumpets ſound,
And warlike ſymphony is heard around.
The marching troops through Athens take their way,
The great earl-marſhal orders their array.
The fair from high the paſſing pomp behold;
A rain of flowers is from the windows roll'd.
The caſements are with golden tiſſue ſpread,
And horſes hoofs, for earth, on ſilken tapeſtry tread;
The king goes midmoſt, and the rivals ride
In equal rank, and cloſe his either ſide.
Next after theſe, there rode the royal wife,
With Emily, the cauſe and the reward of ſtrife.
The following cavalcade, by three and three,
Proceed by titles marſhal'd in degree.
Thus through the ſouthern gate they take their way,
And at the liſt arriv'd ere prime of day.

There, parting from the king, the chiefs divide,
And, wheeling Eaſt and Weſt, before their many ride.
Th' Athenian monarch mounts his throne on high,
And after him the queen and Emily:
Next theſe the kindred of the crown are grac'd
With nearer ſeats, and lords by ladies plac'd.
Scarce were they ſeated, when with clamours loud
In ruſh'd at once a rude promiſcuous crowd:
The guards and then each other overbear,
And in a moment throng the ſpacious theatre.
Now chang'd the jarring noiſe to whiſpers low,
As winds forſaking ſeas more ſoftly blow;
When at the weſtern gate, on which the car
Is plac'd aloft, that bears the God of war,
Proud Arcite entering arm'd before his train,
Stops at the barrier, and divides the plain.
Red was his banner, and diſplay'd abroad
The bloody colours of his patron God.
At that ſelf moment enters Palamon
The gate of Venus, and the riſing-ſun;
Wav'd by the wanton winds, his banner flies,
All maiden white, and ſhares the people's eyes.
From Eaſt to Weſt, look all the world around,
Two troops ſo match'd were never to be found:
Such bodies built for ſtrength, of equal age,
In ſtature fix'd; ſo proud an equipage:
The niceſt eye could no diſtinction make,
Where lay th' advantage, or what ſide to take.
Thus rang'd, the herald for the laſt proclaims
A ſilence, while they anſwer'd to their names:

For

For ſo the king decreed, to ſhun the care,
The fraud of muſters falſe, the common bane of war.
The tale was juſt, and then the gates were clos'd;
And chief to chief, and troop to troop oppos'd.
The heralds laſt retir'd, and loudly cry'd,
The fortune of the field be fairly try'd.
At this, the challenger with fierce defy
His trumpet ſounds; the challeng'd makes reply:
With clangor rings the field, reſounds the vaulted ſky.
Their vizors clos'd, their lances in the reſt,
Or at the helmet pointed, or the creſt;
They vaniſh from the barrier, ſpeed the race,
And ſpurring ſee decreaſe the middle ſpace.
A cloud of ſmoke envelops either hoſt,
And all at once the combatants are loſt:
Darkling they join adverſe, and ſhock unſeen,
Courſers with courſers juſtling, men with men:
As labouring in eclipſe, a while they ſtay,
Till the next blaſt of wind reſtores the day.
They look anew: the beauteous form of fight
Is chang'd, and war appears a grizly ſight.
Two troops in fair array one moment ſhow'd,
The next, a field with fallen bodies ſtrow'd:
Not half the number in their ſeats are found;
But men and ſteeds lie groveling on the ground.
The points of ſpears are ſtuck within the ſhield,
The ſteeds without their riders ſcour the field.
The knights unhors'd, on foot renew the fight;
The glittering faulchions caſt a gleaming light:

Hauberks and helms are hew'd with many a wound:
Out ſpins the ſtreaming blood, and dies the ground.
The mighty maces with ſuch haſte deſcend,
They break the bones, and make the ſolid armour bend.
This thruſts amid the throng with furious force;
Down goes, at once, the horſeman and the horſe:
That courſer ſtumbles on the fallen ſteed,
And floundering throws the rider o'er his head.
One rolls along, a foot-ball to his foes;
One with a broken truncheon deals his blows.
This halting, this diſabled with his wound,
In triumph led, is to the pillar bound,
Where by the king's award he muſt abide:
There goes a captive led on t' other ſide.
By fits they ceaſe; and, leaning on the lance,
Take breath a while, and to new fight advance.
Full oft the rivals met, and neither ſpar'd
His utmoſt force, and each forgot to ward.
The head of this was to the ſaddle bent,
The other backward to the crupper ſent:
Both were by turns unhors'd; the jealous blows
Fall thick and heavy, when on foot they cloſe.
So deep their faulchions bite, that every ſtroke
Pierc'd to the quick; and equal wounds they gave and took.
Borne far aſunder by the tides of men,
Like adamant and ſteel they meet again.
So when a tiger ſucks the bullock's blood,
A famiſh'd lion iſſuing from the wood
Roars lordly fierce, and challenges the food.

Each

Each claims poſſeſſion, neither will obey,
But both their paws are faſten'd on the prey;
They bite, they tear; and while in vain they ſtrive,
The ſwains come arm'd between, and both to diſtance drive.

At length, as fate foredoom'd, and all things tend
By courſe of time to their appointed end;
So when the ſun to Weſt was far declin'd,
And both afreſh in mortal battle join'd,
The ſtrong Emetrius came in Arcite's aid,
And Palamon with odds was overlaid:
For, turning ſhort, he ſtruck with all his might
Full on the helmet of th' unwary knight.
Deep was the wound; he ſtagger'd with the blow,
And turn'd him to his unexpected foe;
Whom with ſuch force he ſtruck, he fell'd him down,
And cleft the circle of his golden crown.
But Arcite's men, who now prevail'd in fight,
Twice ten at once ſurround the ſingle knight:
O'erpower'd, at length, they force him to the ground,
Unyielded as he was, and to the pillar bound;
And king Lycurgus, while he fought in vain
His friend to free, was tumbled on the plain.

Who now laments but Palamon, compell'd
No more to try the fortune of the field!
And, worſe than death, to view with hateful eyes
His rival's conqueſt, and renounce the prize!

The royal judge on his tribunal plac'd,
Who had beheld the fight from firſt to laſt,

Bad

Bad ceaſe the war; pronouncing from on high,
Arcite of Thebes had won the the beauteous Emily.
The ſound of trumpets to the voice reply'd,
And round the royal liſts the heralds cry'd,
Arcite of Thebes has won the beauteous bride.

The people rend the ſkies with vaſt applauſe;
All own the chief, when fortune owns the cauſe.
Arcite is own'd ev'n by the Gods above,
And conquering Mars inſults the Queen of Love.
So laugh'd he, when the rightful Titan fail'd,
And Jove's uſurping arms in heaven prevail'd.
Laugh'd all the powers who favour tyranny;
And all the ſtanding army of the ſky.
But Venus with dejected eyes appears,
And weeping on the liſts diſtill'd her tears;
Her will refus'd, which grieves a woman moſt,
And, in her champion foil'd, the cauſe of Love is loſt.
Till Saturn ſaid, Fair daughter, now be ſtill,
The bluſtering fool has ſatisfy'd his will;
His boon is given; his knight has gain'd the day,
But loſt the prize, th' arrears are yet to pay.
Thy hour is come, and mine the care ſhall be
To pleaſe thy knight, and ſet thy promiſe free.

Now while the heralds run the liſts around,
And Arcite, Arcite, heaven and earth reſound;
A miracle (nor leſs it could be call'd)
Their joy with unexpected ſorrow pall'd.
The victor knight had laid his helm aſide,
Part for his eaſe, the greater part for pride:

Bare-

Bare-headed, popularly low he bow'd,
And paid the ſalutations of the crow'd.
Then ſpurring at full ſpeed, ran endlong on
Where Theſeus ſate on his imperial throne;
Furious he drove, and upward caſt his eye,
Where next the queen was plac'd his Emily;
Then paſſing to the ſaddle-bow he bent:
A ſweet regard the gracious virgin lent
(For women, to the brave an eaſy prey,
Still follow Fortune where ſhe leads the way):
Juſt then, from earth ſprung out a flaſhing fire,
By Pluto ſent, at Sāturn's bad deſire:
The ſtartling ſteed was ſeiz'd with ſudden fright,
And, bounding, o'er the pommel caſt the knight:
Forward he flew, and, pitching on his head,
He quiver'd with his feet, and lay for dead.
Black was his countenance in a little ſpace,
For all the blood was gather'd in his face.
Help was at hand: they rear'd him from the ground,
And from his cumbrous arms his limbs unbound;
Then lanc'd a vein, and watch'd returning breath;
It came, but clogg'd with ſymptoms of his death.
The ſaddle-bow the noble parts had preſt,
All bruis'd and mortify'd his manly breaſt.
Him ſtill entranc'd, and in a litter laid,
They bore from field, and to his bed convey'd.
At length he wak'd, and, with a feeble cry,
The word he firſt pronounc'd was Emily.
Mean time the king, though inwardly he mourn'd,
In pomp triumphant to the town return'd.

Attended

Attended by the chiefs who fought the field
(Now friendly mix'd, and in one troop compell'd).
Compos'd his looks to counterfeited cheer,
And bade them not for Arcite's life to fear.
But that which gladded all the warrior-train,
Though moſt were ſorely wounded, none were ſlain.
The ſurgeons ſoon deſpoil'd them of their arms,
And ſome with ſalves they cure, and ſome with charms;
Foment the bruiſes, and the pains aſſuage,
And heal their inward hurts with ſovereign draughts of ſage.
The king in perſon viſits all around,
Comforts the ſick, congratulates the ſound;
Honours the princely chiefs, rewards the reſt,
And holds for thrice three days a royal feaſt.
None was diſgrac'd; for falling is no ſhame;
And cowardice alone is loſs of fame.
The venturous knight is from the ſaddle thrown;
But 'tis the fault of fortune, not his own,
If crowds and palms the conquering ſide adorn.
The victor under better ſtars was born:
The brave man ſeeks not popular applauſe,
Nor overpower'd with arms deſerts his cauſe;
Unſham'd, though foil'd, he does the beſt he can;
Force is of brutes, but honour is of man.
Thus Theſeus ſmil'd on all with equal grace;
And each was ſet according to his place.
With eaſe were reconcil'd the differing parts,
For envy never dwells in noble hearts.

At

At length they took their leave, the time expir'd;
Well pleas'd, and to their ſeveral homes retir'd.
Mean while the health of Arcite ſtill impairs;
From bad proceeds to worſe, and mocks the leeches cares;
Swoln is his breaſt; his inward pains increaſe,
All means are us'd, and all without ſucceſs.
The clotted blood lies heavy on his heart,
Corrupts, and there remains in ſpite of art:
Nor breathing veins, nor cupping, will prevail;
All outward remedies and inward fail:
The mold of nature's fabric is deſtroy'd,
Her veſſels diſcompos'd, her virtue void:
The bellows of his lungs begin to ſwell:
All out of frame is every ſecret cell,
Nor can the good receive, nor bad expel.
Thoſe breathing organs thus within oppreſt,
With venom ſoon diſtend the ſinews of his breaſt.
Nought profits him to ſave abandon'd life,
Nor vomit's upward aid, nor downward laxative.
The midmoſt region batter'd and deſtroy'd,
When nature cannot work, th' effect of art is void.
For phyſic can but mend our crazy ſtate,
Patch an old building, not a new create.
Arcite is doom'd to die in all his pride,
Muſt leave his youth, and yield his beauteous bride,
Gain'd hardly, againſt right, and unenjoy'd.
When 'twas declar'd all hope of life was paſt,
Conſcience (that of all phyſic works the laſt)
Caus'd him to ſend for Emily in haſte.

With

With her, at his deſire, came Palamon;
Then on his pillow rais'd, he thus begun.
No language can expreſs the ſmalleſt part
Of what I feel, and ſuffer in my heart,
For you, whom beſt I love and value moſt;
But to your ſervice I bequeath my ghoſt;
Which from this mortal body when unty'd,
Unſeen, unheard, ſhall hover at your ſide;
Nor fright you waking, nor your ſleep offend,
But wait officious, and your ſteps attend:
How I have lov'd, excuſe my faltering tongue,
My ſpirits feeble, and my pains are ſtrong:
This I may ſay, I only grieve to die
Becauſe I loſe my charming Emily:
To die, when Heaven had put you in my power,
Fate could not chuſe a more malicious hour!
What greater curſe could envious fortune give,
Than juſt to die, when I began to live!
Vain men, how vaniſhing a bliſs we crave,
Now warm in love, now withering in the grave!
Never, O never more to ſee the ſun!
Still dark, in a damp vault, and ſtill alone!
This fate is common; but I loſe my breath
Near bliſs, and yet not bleſs'd before my death.
Farewel; but take me dying in your arms,
'Tis all I can enjoy of all your charms:
This hand I cannot but in death reſign;
Ah! could I live! but while I live 'tis mine.
I feel my end approach, and thus embrac'd,
Am pleas'd to die; but hear me ſpeak my laſt,

Ah!

Ah! my ſweet foe, for you, and you alone,
I broke my faith with injur'd Palamon.
But love the ſenſe of right and wrong confounds,
Strong love and proud ambition have no bounds.
And much I doubt, ſhould heaven my life prolong,
I ſhould return to juſtify my wrong:
For, while my former flames remain within,
Repentance is but want of power to ſin.
With mortal hatred I purſued his life,
Nor he, nor you, were guilty of the ſtrife:
Nor I, but as I lov'd; yet all combin'd,
Your beauty, and my impotence of mind;
And his concurrent flame, that blew my fire;
For ſtill our kindred ſouls had one deſire.
He had a moment's right in point of time;
Had I ſeen firſt, then his had been the crime.
Fate made it mine, and juſtify'd his right;
Nor holds this earth a more deſerving knight,
For virtue, valour, and for noble blood,
Truth, honour, all that is compriz'd in good;
So help me Heaven, in all the world is none
So worthy to be lov'd as Palamon.
He loves you too, with ſuch an holy fire,
As will not, cannot, but with life expire:
Our vow'd affections both have often try'd,
Nor any love but yours could ours divide.
Then, by my love's inviolable band,
By my long ſuffering, and my ſhort command,
If e'er you plight your vows when I am gone,
Have pity on the faithful Palamon.

This

This was his laſt; for death came on amain,
And exercis'd below his iron reign;
Then upward to the ſeat of life he goes:
Senſe fled before him, what he touch'd he froze:
Yet could he not his cloſing eyes withdraw,
Though leſs and leſs of Emily he ſaw;
So, ſpeechleſs, for a little ſpace he lay;
Then graſp'd the hand he held, and ſigh'd his ſoul away.

But whither went his ſoul, let ſuch relate
Who ſearch the ſecrets of the future ſtate:
Divines can ſay but what themſelves believe;
Strong proofs they have, but not demonſtrative:
For, were all plain, then all ſides muſt agree,
And faith itſelf be loſt in certainty.
To live uprightly then is ſure the beſt,
To ſave ourſelves, and not to damn the reſt.
The ſoul of Arcite went where heathens go,
Who better live than we, though leſs they know.

In Palamon a manly grief appears;
Silent, he wept, aſham'd to ſhew his tears:
Emilia ſhriek'd but once, and then, oppreſs'd
With ſorrow, ſunk upon her lover's breaſt:
Till Theſeus in his arms convey'd with care,
Far from ſo ſad a ſight, the ſwooning fair.
'Twere loſs of time her ſorrow to relate;
Ill bears the ſex a youthful lover's fate,
When juſt approaching to the nuptial ſtate.
But, like a low-hung cloud, it rains ſo faſt,
That all at once it falls, and cannot laſt.

The

The face of things is chang'd, and Athens now,
That laugh'd ſo late, becomes the ſcene of woe:
Matrons and maids, both ſexes, every ſtate,
With tears lament the knight's untimely fate.
Nor greater grief in falling Troy was ſeen
For Hector's death; but Hector was not then.
Old men with duſt deform'd their hoary hair,
The women beat their breaſts, their cheeks they tare.
Why would'ſt thou go, with one conſent they cry,
When thou had'ſt gold enough, and Emily.
Theſeus himſelf, who ſhould have cheer'd the grief
Of others, wanted now the ſame relief.
Old Egeus only could revive his ſon,
Who various changes of the world had known:
And ſtrange viciſſitudes of human fate,
Still altering, never in a ſteady ſtate;
Good after ill, and after pain delight;
Alternate like the ſcenes of day and night:
Since every man who lives is born to die,
And none can boaſt ſincere felicity,
With equal mind what happens let us bear,
Nor joy nor grieve too much for things beyond our care.
Like pilgrims to th' appointed place we tend;
The world 's an inn, and death the journey's end.
Ev'n kings but play; and when their part is done,
Some other, worſe or better, mount the throne.
With words like theſe the crowd was ſatisfy'd,
And ſo they would have been, had Theſeus dy'd.

With high devotion was the ſervice made,
And all the rites of pagan-honour paid:
So lofty was the pile, a Parthian bow,
With vigour drawn, muſt ſend the ſhaft below.
The bottom was full twenty fathom broad,
With crackling ſtraw beneath in due proportion ſtrow'd.
The fabric ſeem'd a wood of riſing green,
With ſulphur and bitumen caſt between,
To feed the flames: the trees were unctuous fir,
And mountain aſh, the mother of the ſpear;
The mourner-yew and builder oak were there:
The beech, the ſwimming alder, and the plane,
Hard box, and linden of a ſofter grain,
And laurels, which the Gods for conquering chiefs ordain.
How they were rank'd, ſhall reſt untold by me,
With nameleſs nymphs that liv'd in every tree;
Nor how the dryads, or the woodland train,
Diſherited, ran howling o'er the plain:
Nor how the birds to foreign ſeats repair'd,
Or beaſts, that bolted out, and ſaw the foreſt bar'd:
Nor how the ground, now clear'd, with ghaſtly fright
Beheld the ſudden ſun, a ſtranger to the light.
The ſtraw, as firſt I ſaid, was laid below:
Of chips and ſere-wood was the ſecond row;
The third of greens, and timber newly fell'd;
The fourth high ſtage the fragrant odours held,
And pearls, and precious ſtones, and rich array;
In midſt of which, embalm'd, the body lay.

The ſervice ſung, the maid with mourning eyes
The ſtubble fir'd; the ſmouldering flames ariſe:
This office done, ſhe ſunk upon the ground;
But what ſhe ſpoke, recover'd from her ſwoon,
I want the wit in moving words to dreſs;
But by themſelves the tender ſex may gueſs.
While the devouring fire was burning faſt,
Rich jewels in the flame the wealthy caſt;
And ſome their ſhields, and ſome their lances threw,
And gave their warrior's ghoſt a warrior's due.
Full bowls of wine, of honey, milk, and blood,
Were pour'd upon the pile of burning wood,
And hiſſing flames receive, and hungry lick the food.
Then thrice the mounted ſquadrons ride around
The fire, and Arcite's name they thrice reſound;
Hail, and farewel, they ſhouted thrice amain,
Thrice facing to the left, and thrice they turn'd again:
Still as they turn'd, they beat their clattering ſhields;
The women mix their cries; and clamour fills the fields.
The warlike wakes continued all the night,
And funeral games were play'd at new returning light;
Who naked wreſtled beſt, beſmear'd with oil,
Or who with gauntlets gave or took the foil,
I will not tell you, nor would you attend;
But briefly haſte to my long ſtory's end.

I paſs the reſt; the year was fully mourn'd,
And Palamon long ſince to Thebes return'd:
When, by the Grecians' general conſent,
At Athens Theſeus held his parliament:

Among the laws that paſs'd, it was decreed,
That conquer'd Thebes from bondage ſhould be freed;
Reſerving homage to th' Athenian throne,
To which the ſovereign nam'd Palamon.
Unknowing of the cauſe, he took his way,
Mournful in mind, and ſtill in black array.

The monarch mounts the throne, and, plac'd on high,
Commands into the court the beauteous Emily:
So call'd, ſhe came; the ſenate roſe, and paid
Becoming reverence to the royal maid.
And firſt ſoft whiſpers through th' aſſembly went:
With ſilent wonder then they watch'd the event:
All hush'd, the king aroſe with awful grace,
Deep thought was in his breaſt, and counſel in his face.
At length he ſigh'd; and, having firſt prepar'd
Th' attentive audience, thus his will declar'd.

The Cauſe and ſpring of motion, from above,
Hung down on earth the golden chain of love:
Great was th' effect, and high was his intent,
When peace among the jarring ſeeds he ſent.
Fire, flood, and earth, and air, by this were bound,
And Love, the common link, the new creation crown'd.
The chain ſtill holds; for, though the forms decay,
Eternal matter never wears away.
The ſame firſt mover certain bounds has plac'd,
How long thoſe periſhable forms ſhall laſt:
Nor can they laſt beyond the time aſſign'd
By that all-ſeeing and all-making mind:
Shorten their hours they may; for will is free;
But never paſs th' appointed deſtiny.

So

So men oppreſs'd, when weary of their breath,
Throw off the burden, and ſuborn their death.
Then, ſince thoſe forms begin, and have their end,
On ſome unalter'd cauſe they ſure depend:
Parts of the whole are we; but God the whole;
Who gives us life and animating ſoul:
For nature cannot from a part derive
That being, which the whole can only give:
He perfect, ſtable; but imperfect we,
Subject to change, and different in degree;
Plants, beaſts, and man; and, as our organs are,
We more or leſs of his perfection ſhare.
But by a long deſcent, th' etherial fire
Corrupts; and forms, the mortal part, expire:
As he withdraws his virtue, ſo they paſs,
And the ſame matter makes another maſs:
This law th' Omniſcient Power was pleas'd to give,
That every kind ſhould by ſucceſſion live:
That individuals die, his will ordains;
The propagated ſpecies ſtill remains.
The monarch oak, the patriarch of the trees,
Shoots riſing up, and ſpreads by ſlow degrees;
Three centuries he grows, and three he ſtays,
Supreme in ſtate, and in three more decays;
So wears the paving pebble in the ſtreet,
And towns and towers their fatal periods meet:
So rivers, rapid once, now naked lie,
Forſaken of their ſprings; and leave their channels dry.
So man, at firſt a drop, dilates with heat,
Then, form'd, the little heart begins to beat;

Secret he feeds, unknowing in the cell;
At length, for hatching ripe, he breaks the ſhell,
And ſtruggles into breath, and cries for aid;
Then, helpleſs, in his mother's lap is laid.
He creeps, he walks, and, iſſuing into man,
Grudges their life, from whence his own began:
Reckleſs of laws, affects to rule alone,
Anxious to reign, and reſtleſs on the throne:
Firſt vegetive, then feels, and reaſons laſt;
Rich of three ſouls, and lives all three to waſte.
Some thus; but thouſands more in flower of age:
For few arrive to run the latter ſtage.
Sunk in the firſt, in battle ſome are ſlain,
And others whelm'd beneath the ſtormy main.
What makes all this, but Jupiter the king,
At whoſe command we periſh, and we ſpring?
Then 'tis our beſt, ſince thus ordain'd to die,
To make a virtue of neceſſity.
Take what he gives, ſince to rebel is vain;
The bad grows better, which we well ſuſtain;
And could we chuſe the time, and chuſe aright,
'Tis beſt to die, our honour at the height.
When we have done our anceſtors no ſhame,
But ſerv'd our friends, and well ſecur'd our fame;
Then ſhould we wiſh our happy life to cloſe,
And leave no more for fortune to diſpoſe:
So ſhould we make our death a glad relief
From future ſhame, from ſickneſs, and from grief:
Enjoying while we live the preſent hour,
And dying in our excellence and flower.

Then

Then round our death-bed every friend ſhould run,
And joyous of our conqueſt early won:
While the malicious world with envious tears
Should grudge our happy end, and with it theirs.
Since then our Arcite is with honour dead,
Why ſhould we mourn, that he ſo ſoon is freed,
Or call untimely, what the Gods decreed?
With grief as juſt, a friend may be deplor'd,
From a foul priſon to free air reſtor'd.
Ought he to thank his kinſmen or his wife,
Could tears recal him into wretched life?
Their ſorrow hurts themſelves; on him is loſt;
And, worſe than both, offends his happy ghoſt.
What then remains, but, after paſt annoy,
To take the good viciſſitude of joy?
To thank the gracious Gods for what they give,
Poſſeſs our ſouls, and, while we live, to live?
Ordain we then two ſorrows to combine,
And in one point th' extremes of grief to join;
That thence reſulting joy may be renew'd,
As jarring notes in harmony conclude.
Then I propoſe that Palamon ſhall be
In marriage join'd with beauteous Emily;
For which already I have gain'd th' aſſent
Of my free people in full parliament.
Long love to her has borne the faithful knight,
And well deſerv'd, had fortune done him right:
'Tis time to mend her fault; ſince Emily
By Arcite's death from former vows is free:

If

If you, fair ſiſter, ratify th' accord;
And take him for your huſband and your lord,
'Tis no diſhonour to confer your grace
On one deſcended from a royal race:
And were he leſs, yet years of ſervice paſt
From grateful ſouls exact reward at laſt:
Pity is Heaven's and your's; nor can ſhe find
A throne ſo ſoft as in a woman's mind.
He ſaid; ſhe bluſh'd; and, as o'eraw'd by might,
Seem'd to give Theſeus what ſhe gave the knight.
Then turning to the Theban thus he ſaid;
Small arguments are needful to perſuade
Your temper to comply with my command;
And ſpeaking thus, he gave Emilia's hand.
Smil'd Venus, to behold her own true knight
Obtain the conqueſt, though he loſt the fight;
And bleſs'd with nuptial bliſs the ſweet laborious night.
Eros, and Anteros, on either ſide,
One fir'd the bridegroom, and one warm'd the bride;
And long-attending Hymen from above,
Shower'd on the bed the whole Idalian grove.
All of a tenor was their after-life,
No day diſcolour'd with domeſtic ſtrife;
No jealouſy, but mutual truth believ'd,
Secure repoſe, and kindneſs undeceiv'd.
Thus Heaven, beyond the compaſs of his thought,
Sent him the bleſſing he ſo dearly bought.
So may the Queen of Love long duty bleſs,
And all true lovers find the ſame ſucceſs.

THE

THE COCK AND THE FOX.

OR,

THE TALE OF THE NUN'S PRIEST.

THERE liv'd, as authors tell, in days of yore,
A widow somewhat old, and very poor:
Deep in her cell her cottage lonely ſtood,
Well thatch'd, and under covert of a wood.
This dowager, on whom my tale I found,
Since laſt ſhe laid her huſband in the ground,
A ſimple ſober life, in patience, led,
And had but juſt enough to buy her bread:
But huſwifing the little Heaven had lent,
She duly paid a groat for quarter rent;
And pinch'd her belly, with her daughters two,
To bring the year about with much ado.
The cattle in her homeſtead were three ſows,
An ewe call'd Mally, and three brinded cows.
Her parlour-window ſtuck with herbs around,
Of ſavoury ſmell; and ruſhes ſtrew'd the ground.
A maple-dreſſer in her hall ſhe had,
On which full many a ſlender meal ſhe made;
For no delicious morſel paſs'd her throat;
According to her cloth ſhe cut her coat:
No poignant ſauce ſhe knew, nor coſtly treat,
Her hunger gave a reliſh to her meat;

A ſparing

A ſparing diet did her health aſſure;
Or, ſick, a pepper poſſet was her cure.
Before the day was done, her work ſhe ſped,
And never went by candle-light to bed:
With exerciſe ſhe ſweat ill humours out,
Her dancing was not hinder'd by the gout.
Her poverty was glad; her heart content;
Nor knew ſhe what the ſpleen or vapours meant.
Of wine ſhe never taſted through the year,
But white and black was all her homely chear:
Brown bread, and milk (but firſt ſhe ſkim'd her bowls),
And raſhers of ſing'd bacon on the coals.
On holy days an egg, or two at moſt;
But her ambition never reach'd to roaſt.
A yard ſhe had with pales inclos'd about,
Some high, ſome low, and a dry ditch without.
Within this homeſtead, liv'd, without a peer,
For crowing loud, the noble Chanticleer;
So hight her cock, whoſe ſinging did ſurpaſs
The merry notes of organs at the maſs.
More certain was the crowing of the cock
To number hours, than is an abbey-clock;
And ſooner than the mattin-bell was rung,
He clap'd his wings upon his rooſt, and ſung:
For when degrees fifteen aſcended right,
By ſure inſtinct he knew 'twas one at night.
High was his comb; and coral-red withal,
In dents embattled like a caſtle wall;
His bill was raven-black, and ſhone like jet;
Blue were his legs, and toes'd were his feet:

White

White were his nails, like ſilver to behold,
His body glittering like the burniſh'd gold.
This gentle cock, for ſolace of his life,
Six miſſes had, beſides his lawful wife;
Scandal, that ſpares no king, though ne'er ſo good,
Says, they were all of his own fleſh and blood,
His ſiſters both by ſire and mother's ſide;
And ſure their likeneſs ſhow'd them near ally'd.
But make the worſt, the monarch did no more,
Than all the Ptolemys had done before:
When inceſt is for intereſt of a nation,
'Tis made no ſin by holy diſpenſation.
Some lines have been maintain'd by this alone,
Which by their common uglineſs are known.
But paſſing this as from our tale apart,
Dame Partlet was the ſovereign of his heart:
Ardent in love, outrageous in his play,
He feather'd her a hundred times a day:
And ſhe, that was not only paſſing fair,
But was withal diſcreet, and debonair,
Reſolv'd the paſſive doctrine to fulfil,
Though loth; and let him work his wicked will:
At board and bed was affable and kind,
According as their marriage-vow did bind,
And as the church's precept had injoin'd.
Ev'n ſince ſhe was a ſe'nnight old, they ſay,
Was chaſte and humble to her dying day,
Nor chick nor hen was known to diſobey.
By this her huſband's heart ſhe did obtain;
What cannot beauty, join'd with virtue, gain!

She

She was his only joy, and he her pride,
She, when he walk'd, went pecking by his ſide;
If, ſpurning up the ground, he ſprung a corn,
The tribute in his bill to her was borne:
But, oh! what joy it was to hear him ſing
In ſummer, when the day began to ſpring,
Stretching his neck, and warbling in his throat,
"Solus cum ſola," then was all his note.
For in the days of yore, the birds of parts
Were bred to ſpeak, and ſing, and learn the liberal arts.

It happ'd that, perching on the parlour-beam
Amidſt his wives, he had a deadly dream,
Juſt at the dawn: and ſigh'd, and groan'd ſo faſt,
As every breath he drew would be his laſt.
Dame Partlet, ever neareſt to his ſide,
Heard all his piteous moan, and how he cry'd
For help from Gods and men: and ſore aghaſt
She peck'd and pull'd, and waken'd him at laſt.
Dear heart, ſaid ſhe, for love of Heaven, declare
Your pain, and make me partner of your care.
You groan, Sir, ever ſince the morning-light,
As ſomething had diſturb'd your noble ſpright.

And madam, well I might, ſaid Chanticleer,
Never was ſhrovetide cock in ſuch a fear.
Even ſtill I run all over in a ſweat,
My princely ſenſes not recover'd yet.
For ſuch a dream I had of dire portent,
That much I fear my body will be ſhent:
It bodes I ſhall have wars and woeful ſtrife,
Or in a loathſome dungeon end my life.

Know,

Know, dame, I dreamt within my troubled breaſt,
That in our yard I ſaw a murderous beaſt,
That on my body would have made arreſt.
With waking eyes I ne'er beheld his fellow;
His colour was betwixt a red and yellow:
Tipp'd was his tail, and both his pricking ears
Were black; and much unlike his other hairs:
The reſt, in ſhape a beagle's whelp throughout,
With broader forehead, and a ſharper ſnout:
Deep in his front were ſunk his glowing eyes,
That yet methinks I ſee him with ſurprize.
Reach out your hand, I drop with clammy ſweat,
And lay it to my heart, and feel it beat.
Now fy for ſhame, quoth ſhe, by Heaven above,
Thou haſt for ever loſt thy lady's love;
No woman can endure a recreant knight,
He muſt be bold by day, and free by night:
Our ſex deſires a huſband or a friend,
Who can our honour and his own defend;
Wiſe, hardy, ſecret, liberal of his purſe,
A fool is nauſeous, but a coward worſe:
No bragging coxcomb, yet no baffled knight.
How dar'ſt thou talk of love, and dar'ſt not fight?
How dar'ſt thou tell thy dame thou art afear'd?
Haſt thou no manly heart, and haſt a beard?
If aught from fearful dreams may be divin'd,
They ſignify a cock of dunghill kind.
All dreams, as in old Galen I have read,
Are from replation and complexion bred.

From

From rising fumes of indigested food,
And noxious humours that infect the blood:
And sure, my lord, if I can read aright,
These foolish fancies, you have had to-night,
Are certain symptoms (in the canting stile)
Of boiling choler, and abounding bile;
This yellow gall that in your stomach floats,
Engenders all these visionary thoughts.
When choler overflows, then dreams are bred
Of flames, and all the family of red;
Red dragons, and red beasts, in sleep we view,
For humours are distinguish'd by their hue.
From hence we dream of wars and warlike things,
And wasps and hornets with their double wings.
Choler adust congeals our blood with fear,
Then black bulls toss us, and blacks devils tear.
In sanguine airy dreams aloft we bound,
With rheums oppress'd we sink in rivers drown'd.
More I could say, but thus conclude my theme,
The dominating humour makes the dream.
Cato was in his time accounted wise,
And he condemns them all for empty lies.
Take my advice, and when we fly to ground,
With laxatives preserve your body sound,
And purge the peccant humours that abound.
I should be loth to lay you on a bier;
And though there lives no 'pothecary near,
I dare for once prescribe for your disease,
And save long bills, and a damn'd doctor's fees.

Two

Two ſovereign herbs which I by practice know,
And both at hand (for in our yard they grow);
On peril of my ſoul ſhall rid you wholly
Of yellow choler, and of melancholy:
You muſt both purge and vomit; but obey,
And for the love of heaven make no delay.
Since hot and dry in your complexion join,
Beware the ſun when in a vernal ſign;
For when he mounts exalted in the ram,
If then he finds your body in a flame,
Replete with choler, I dare lay a groat,
A tertian ague is at leaſt your lot.
Perhaps a fever (which the Gods forefend)
May bring your youth to ſome untimely end:
And therefore, ſir, as you deſire to live,
A day or two before your laxative,
Take juſt three worms, nor under nor above,
Becauſe the Gods unequal numbers love.
Theſe digeſtives prepare you for your purge;
Of fumetery, centaury, and ſpurge,
And of ground-ivy add a leaf or two,
All which within our yard or garden grow.
Eat theſe, and be, my lord, of better cheer;
Your father's ſon was never born to fear.
Madam, quoth he, grammercy for your care,
But Cato, whom you quoted, you may ſpare:
'Tis true, a wiſe and worthy man he ſeems,
And (as you ſay) gave no belief to dreams:
But other men of more authority,
And, by th' immortal powers, as wiſe as he,

Maintain, with ſounder ſenſe, that dreams forebode;
For Homer plainly ſays they come from God.
Nor Cato ſaid it: but ſome modern fool
Impos'd in Cato's name on boys at ſchool.
Believe me, madam, morning dreams foreſhow
Th' events of things, and future weal or woe:
Some truths are not by reaſon to be try'd,
But we have ſure experience for our guide.
An ancient author, equal with the beſt,
Relates this tale of dreams among the reſt.
Two friends or brothers, with devout intent,
On ſome far pilgrimage together went.
It happen'd ſo that, when the ſun was down,
They juſt arriv'd by twilight at a town:
That day had been the baiting of a bull,
'Twas at a feaſt, and every inn ſo full,
That no void room in chamber, or on ground;
And but one ſorry bed was to be found:
And that ſo little it would hold but one,
Though till this hour they never lay alone.
So were they forc'd to part; one ſtay'd behind,
His fellow ſought what lodging he could find:
At laſt he found a ſtall where oxen ſtood,
And that he rather chooſe than lie abroad.
'Twas in a farther yard without a door;
But, for his eaſe, well litter'd was the floor.
His fellow, who the narrow bed had kept,
Was weary, and without a rocker ſlept:
Supine he ſnor'd; but in the dead of night,
He dreamt his friend appear'd before his ſight,

Who,

Who, with a ghaſtly look and doleful cry,
Said, Help me, brother, or this night I die:
Ariſe, and help, before all help be vain,
Or in an ox's ſtall I ſhall be ſlain.
Rous'd from his reſt, he waken'd in a ſtart,
Shivering with horror, and with aking heart;
At length to cure himſelf by reaſon tries;
'Tis but a dream, and what are dreams but lies?
So thinking, chang'd his ſide, and clos'd his eyes.
His dream returns; his friend appears again:
The murderers come, now help, or I am ſlain:
'Twas but a viſion ſtill, and viſions are but vain.
He dreamt the third: but now his friend appear'd
Pale, naked, pierc'd with wounds, with blood beſmear'd:
Thrice warn'd, awake, ſaid he; relief is late,
The deed is done; but thou revenge my fate:
Tardy of aid, unſeal thy heavy eyes,
Awake, and with the dawning day ariſe:
Take to the weſtern gate thy ready way,
For by that paſſage they my corpſe convey:
My corpſe is in a tumbril laid, among
The filth and ordure, and inclos'd with dung:
That cart arreſt, and raiſe a common cry;
For ſacred hunger of my gold, I die:
Then ſhew'd his grieſly wound: and laſt he drew
A piteous ſigh; and took a long adieu.
The frighted friend aroſe by break of day,
And found the ſtall where late his fellow lay.
Then of his impious hoſt inquiring more,
Was anſwer'd that his gueſt was gone before:

Muttering, he went, ſaid he, by morning-light,
And much complain'd of his ill reſt by night.
This rais'd ſuſpicion in the pilgrim's mind;
Becauſe all hoſts are of an evil kind,
And oft to ſhare the ſpoils with robbers join'd.
His dream confirm'd his thought: with troubled look
Straight to the weſtern gate his way he took;
There, as his dream foretold, a cart he found,
That carry'd compoſt forth to dung the ground.
This when the pilgrim ſaw, he ſtretch'd his throat,
And cry'd out *murder* with a yelling note.
My murder'd fellow in this cart lies dead,
Vengeance and juſtice on the villain's head.
Ye magiſtrates, who ſacred laws diſpenſe,
On you I call, to puniſh this offence.
The word thus given, within a little ſpace,
The mob came roaring out, and throng'd the place.
All in a trice they caſt the cart to ground,
And in the dung the murder'd body found;
Though breathleſs, warm, and reeking from the wound.
Good heaven, whoſe darling attribute we find
Is boundleſs grace, and mercy to mankind,
Abhors the cruel; and the deeds of night
By wondrous ways reveals in open light:
Murder may paſs unpuniſh'd for a time,
But tardy juſtice will o'ertake the crime.
And oft a ſpeedier pain the guilty feels:
The hue and cry of heaven purſues him at the heels,

Freſh from the fact; as in the preſent caſe,
The criminals are ſeiz'd upon the place:
Carter and hoſt confronted face to face.
Stiff in denial, as the law appoints,
On engines they diſtend their tortur'd joints:
So was confeſſion forc'd, th' offence was known,
And public juſtice on th' offenders done.

Here may you ſee that viſions are to dread;
And in the page that follows this, I read
Of two young merchants, whom the hope of gain
Induc'd in partnerſhip to croſs the main:
Waiting till willing winds their ſails ſupply'd,
Within a trading-town they long abide,
Full fairly ſituate on a haven's ſide.

One evening it befel, that looking out,
The wind they long had wiſh'd was come about:
Well-pleas'd they went to reſt; and if the gale
Till morn continued, both reſolv'd to ſail.
But as together in a bed they lay,
The younger had a dream at break of day.
A man he thought ſtood frowning at his ſide:
Who warn'd him for his ſafety to provide,
Nor put to ſea, but ſafe on ſhore abide.
I come, thy genius, to command thy ſtay;
Truſt not the winds, for fatal is the day,
And death unhop'd attends the watery way.

The viſion ſaid: and vaniſh'd from his ſight:
The dreamer waken'd in a mortal fright:
Then pull'd his drowſy neighbour, and declar'd
What in his ſlumber he had ſeen and heard.

His friend ſmil'd ſcornful, and with proud contempt
Rejects as idle what his fellow dreamt.
Stay, who will ſtay: for me no fears reſtrain,
Who follow Mercury the god of gain;
Let each man do as to his fancy ſeems,
I wait not, I, till you have better dreams.
Dreams are but interludes which fancy makes;
When monarch reaſon ſleeps, this mimic wakes:
Compounds a medley of diſjointed things,
A mob of coblers, and a court of kings:
Light fumes are merry, groſſer fumes are ſad:
Both are the reaſonable ſoul run mad;
And many monſtrous forms in ſleep we ſee,
That neither were, nor are, nor e'er can be.
Sometimes forgotten things long caſt behind
Ruſh forward in the brain, and come to mind.
The nurſe's legends are for truths receiv'd,
And the man dreams but what the boy believ'd.
Sometimes we but rehearſe a former play,
The night reſtores our actions done by day;
As hounds in ſleep will open for their prey.
In ſhort, the farce of dreams is of a piece,
Chimeras all; and more abſurd, or leſs:
You, who believe in tales, abide alone;
Whate'er I get this voyage is my own.
Thus while he ſpoke, he heard the ſhouting crew
That call'd aboard, and took his laſt adieu.
The veſſel went before a merry gale,
And for quick paſſage put on every ſail:

But

But when leaſt fear'd, and ev'n in open day,
The miſchief overtook her in the way:
Whether ſhe ſprung a leak, I cannot find,
Or whether ſhe was overſet with wind,
Or that ſome rock below her bottom rent;
But down at once with all her crew ſhe went:
Her fellow ſhips from far her loſs deſcry'd;
But only ſhe was ſunk, and all were ſafe beſide.
By this example you are taught again,
That dreams and viſions are not always vain:
But if, dear Partlet, you are ſtill in doubt,
Another tale ſhall make the former out.
Kenelm the ſon of Kenulph, Mercia's king,
Whoſe holy life the legends loudly ſing,
Warn'd in a dream his murder did foretel
From point to point as after it befel;
All circumſtances to his nurſe he told
(A wonder from a child of ſeven years old):
The dream with horror heard, the good old wife
From treaſon counſel'd him to guard his life;
But cloſe to keep the ſecret in his mind,
For a boy's viſion ſmall belief would find.
The pious child, by promiſe bound, obey'd,
Nor was the fatal murder long delay'd:
By Quenda ſlain, he fell before his time,
Made a young martyr by his ſiſter's crime.
The tale is told by venerable Bede,
Which at your better leiſure you may read.
Macrobius too relates the viſion ſent
To the great Scipio, with the fam'd event:

Objections makes, but after makes replies,
And adds, that dreams are often propheſies.
Of Daniel you may read in holy writ,
Who, when the king his viſion did forget,
Could word for word the wondrous dream repeat.
Nor leſs of patriarch Joſeph underſtand,
Who by a dream enſlav'd th' Egyptian land,
The years of plenty and of dearth foretold,
When, for their bread, their liberty they ſold.
Nor muſt th' exalted butler be forgot,
Nor he whoſe dream preſag'd his hanging lot.
And did not Crœſus the ſame death foreſee,
Rais'd in his viſion on a lofty tree?
The wife of Hector, in his utmoſt pride,
Dreamt of his death the night before he dy'd;
Well was he warn'd from battle to refrain,
But men to death decreed are warn'd in vain:
He dar'd the dream, and by his fatal foe was ſlain.
Much more I know, which I forbear to ſpeak,
For ſee the ruddy day begins to break;
Let this ſuffice, that plainly I foreſee
My dream was bad, and bodes adverſity:
But neither pills nor laxatives I like,
They only ſerve to make the well-man ſick:
Of theſe his gain the ſharp phyſician makes,
And often gives a purge, but ſeldom takes:
They not correct, but poiſon all the blood,
And ne'er did any but the doctors good.
Their tribe, trade, trinkets, I defy them all;
With every work of 'pothecary's hall.

Theſe

Theſe melancholy matters I forbear:
But let me tell thee, Partlet mine, and ſwear,
That when I view the beauties of thy face,
I fear not death, nor dangers, nor diſgrace:
So may my ſoul have bliſs, as when I ſpy
The ſcarlet red about thy partridge eye,
While thou art conſtant to thy own true knight,
While thou art mine, and I am thy delight,
All ſorrows at thy preſence take their flight.
For true it is, as "in principio,
"Mulier eſt hominis confuſio."
Madam, the meaning of this Latin is,
That woman is to man his ſovereign bliſs.
For when by night I feel your tender ſide,
Though for the narrow perch I cannot ride,
Yet I have ſuch a ſolace in my mind,
That all my boding cares are caſt behind;
And ev'n already I forget my dream:
He ſaid, and downward flew from off the beam.
For day-light now began apace to ſpring,
The thruſh to whiſtle, and the lark to ſing.
Then crowing clapp'd his wings, th'appointed call,
To chuck his wives together in the hall.
By this the widow had unbarr'd the door,
And Chanticleer went ſtrutting out before,
With royal courage, and with heart ſo light,
As ſhew'd he ſcorn'd the viſions of the night.
Now roaming in the yard he ſpurn'd the ground,
And gave to Partlet the firſt grain he found.

Then

Then often feather'd her with wanton play,
And trod her twenty times ere prime of day:
And took by turns and gave ſo much delight,
Her ſiſters pin'd with envy at the ſight.
He chuck'd again, when other corns he found,
And ſcarcely deign'd to ſet a foot to ground.
But ſwagger'd like a lord about his hall,
And his ſeven wives came running at his call.
'Twas now the month in which the world began
(If March beheld the firſt created man);
And ſince the vernal equinox, the ſun,
In Aries twelve degrees, or more, had run;
When caſting up his eyes againſt the light,
Both month, and day, and hour, he meaſur'd right;
And told more truly, than th' Ephemeris:
For art may err, but nature cannot miſs.
Thus numbering times and ſeaſons in his breaſt,
His ſecond crowing the third hour confeſs'd.
Then turning, ſaid to Partlet, See, my dear,
How laviſh nature has adorn'd the year;
How the pale primroſe and blue violet ſpring,
And birds eſſay their throats diſus'd to ſing:
All theſe are ours; and I with pleaſure ſee
Man ſtrutting on two legs, and aping me:
An unfledg'd creature, of a lumpiſh frame,
Endow'd with fewer particles of flame:
Our dame ſits couring o'er a kitchen fire,
I draw freſh air, and nature's works admire:
And ev'n this day in more delight abound,
Than, ſince I was an egg, I ever found.

The time ſhall come when Chanticleer ſhall wiſh
His words unſaid, and hate his boaſted bliſs:
The creſted bird ſhall by experience know,
Jove made not him his maſter-piece below;
And learn the latter-end of joy is woe.
The veſſel of his bliſs to dregs is run,
And Heaven will have him taſte his other tun.

Ye wife, draw near, and hearken to my tale,
Which proves that oft the proud by flattery fall:
The legend is as true I undertake
As Triſtran is, and Launcelot of the lake:
Which all our ladies in ſuch reverence hold,
As if in book of martyrs it were told.

A fox full-fraught with ſeeming ſanctity,
That fear'd an oath, but, like the devil, would lie;
Who look'd like Lent, and had the holy leer,
And durſt not, ſin before he ſaid his prayer;
This pious cheat, that never ſuck'd the blood,
Nor chew'd the fleſh of lambs, but when he cou'd;
Had paſs'd three ſummers in the neighbouring wood:
And muſing long, whom next to circumvent,
On Chanticleer his wicked fancy bent:
And in his high imagination caſt,
By ſtratagem to gratify his taſte.

The plot contriv'd, before the break of day,
Saint Reynard through the hedge had made his way;
The pale was next, but proudly with a bound
He leapt the fence of the forbidden ground:
Yet, fearing to be ſeen, within a bed
Of coleworts he conceal'd his wily head;

Then

Then ſculk'd till afternoon, and watch'd his time,
(As murderers uſe) to perpetrate his crime.
O hypocrite, ingenious to deſtroy,
O traitor, worſe than Simon was to Troy;
O vile ſubverter of the Gallic reign,
More falſe than Gano was to Charlemaign!
O Chanticleer, in an unhappy hour
Didſt thou forſake the ſafety of thy bower:
Better for thee thou hadſt believ'd thy dream,
And not that day deſcended from the beam!
But here the doctors eagerly diſpute:
Some hold predeſtination abſolute:
Some clerks maintain, that Heaven at firſt foreſees,
And in the virtue of foreſight decrees.
If this be ſo, then preſcience binds the will,
And mortals are not free to good or ill:
For what he firſt foreſaw, he muſt ordain,
Or its eternal preſcience may be vain:
As bad for us as preſcience had not been:
For firſt, or laſt, he's author of the ſin.
And who ſays that, let the blaſpheming man
Say worſe ev'n of the devil, if he can.
For how can that eternal Power be juſt
To puniſh man, who ſins becauſe he muſt?
Or, how can he reward a virtuous deed,
Which is not done by us; but firſt decreed.
I cannot bolt this matter to the bran,
As Bradwardin and holy Auſtin can;
If preſcience can determine actions ſo
That we muſt do, becauſe he did foreknow,

Or that, foreknowing, yet our choice is free,
Not forc'd to ſin by ſtrict neceſſity;
This ſtrict neceſſity they ſimple call,
Another ſort there is conditional.
The firſt ſo binds the will, that things foreknown
By ſpontaneity, not choice, are done.
Thus galley-ſlaves tug willing at their oar,
Content to work, in proſpect of the ſhore;
But would not work at all if not conſtrain'd before.
That other does not liberty conſtrain,
But man may either act, or may refrain.
Heaven made us agents free to good or ill,
And forc'd it not, though he foreſaw the will.
Freedom was firſt beſtow'd on human race,
And preſcience only held the ſecond place.
If he could make ſuch agents wholly free,
I not diſpute, the point 's too high for me;
For heaven's unfathom'd power what man can ſound,
Or put to his Omnipotence a bound?
He made us to his image, all agree;
That image is the ſoul, and that muſt be,
Or not the maker's image, or be free.
But whether it were better man had been
By nature bound to good, not free to ſin,
I wave, for fear of ſplitting on a rock.
The tale I tell is only of a cock;
Who had not run the hazard of his life,
Had he believ'd his dream, and not his wife:
For women, with a miſchief to their kind,
Pervert, with bad advice, our better mind.

But ſince I ſpeak of ſinging, let me ſay,
As with an upright heart I ſafely may,
That, ſave yourſelf, there breathes not on the ground
One like your father for a ſilver-ſound.
So ſweetly would he wake the winter-day,
That matrons to the church miſtook their way.
And thought they heard the merry organ play.
And he, to raiſe his voice with artful care,
(What will not beaux artempt to pleaſe the fair?)
On tiptoe ſtood to ſing with greater ſtrength,
And ſtretch'd his comely neck at all the length:
And while he ſtrain'd his voice to pierce the ſkies,
As ſaints in raptures uſe, would ſhut his eyes,
That the ſound ſtriving through the narrow throat,
His winking might avail to mend the note.
By this, in ſong, he never had his peer,
From ſweet Cecilia down to Chanticleer;
Not Maro's muſe, who ſung the mighty man,
Nor Pindar's heavenly lyre, nor Horace when a ſwan.
Your anceſtors proceed from race divine:
From Brennus and Belinus is your line;
Who gave to ſovereign Rome ſuch loud alarms,
That ev'n the prieſts were not excus'd from arms.
Beſides, a famous monk of modern times
Has left of cocks recorded in his rhymes,
That of a pariſh-prieſt the ſon and heir,
(When ſons of prieſts were from the proverb clear)
Affronted once a cock of noble kind,
And either lam'd his legs, or ſtruck him blind;

For

For which the clerk his father was disgrac'd,
And in his benefice another plac'd.
Now sing, my lord, if not for love of me,
Yet for the sake of sweet saint charity;
Make hills and dales, and earth and heaven rejoice,
And emulate your father's angel voice.
The cock was pleas'd to hear him speak so fair,
And proud beside, as solar people are;
Nor could the treason from the truth descry,
So was he ravish'd with this flattery:
So much the more, as, from a little elf,
He had a high opinion of himself;
Though sickly, slender, and not large of limb,
Concluding all the world was made for him.
Ye princes rais'd by poets to the Gods,
And Alexander'd up in lying odes,
Believe not every flattering knave's report,
There's many a Reynard lurking in the court;
And he shall be receiv'd with more regard
And listen'd to, than modest truth is heard.
This Chanticleer, of whom the story sings,
Stood high upon his toes, and clapp'd his wings;
Then stretch'd his neck, and wink'd with both his eyes,
Ambitious, as he sought th' Olympic prize.
But, while he pain'd himself to raise his note,
False Reynard rush'd, and caught him by the throat.
Then on his back he laid the precious load,
And sought his wonted shelter of the wood;
Swiftly he made his way, the mischief done,
Of all unheeded, and pursued by none.

Alas, what ſtay is there in human ſtate,
Or who can ſhun inevitable fate?
The doom was written, the decree was paſt,
Ere the foundations of the world were caſt!
In Aries though the ſun exalted ſtood,
His patron-planet to procure his good;
Yet Saturn was his mortal foe, and he,
In Libra rais'd, oppos'd the ſame degree:
The rays both good and bad, of equal power,
Each thwarting other made a mingled hour.
On Friday morn he dreamt this direful dream,
Croſs to the worthy native, in his ſcheme!
Ah bliſsful Venus, Goddeſs of delight,
How could'ſt thou ſuffer thy devoted knight,
On thy own day to fall by foe oppreſs'd,
The wight of all the world who ſerv'd thee beſt?
Who, true to love, was all for recreation,
And minded not the work of propagation.
Gaufride, who could'ſt ſo well in rhyme complain
The death of Richard with an arrow ſlain,
Why had not I thy Muſe, or thou my heart,
To ſing this heavy dirge with equal art!
That I like thee on Friday might complain;
For on that day was Cœur de-Lion ſlain.
Not louder cries, when Ilium was in flames,
Were ſent to heaven by woful Trojan dames,
When Pyrrhus toſs'd on high his burniſh'd blade,
And offer'd Priam to his father's ſhade,
Than for the cock the widow'd poultry made.

Fair

Fair Partlet firſt, when he was borne from ſight,
With ſoverëign ſhrieks bewail'd her captive knight:
Far louder than the Carthaginian wife,
When Aſdrubal her huſband loſt his life,
When ſhe beheld the ſmouldering flames aſcend,
And all the Punic glories at an end:
Willing into the fires ſhe plung'd her head,
With greater eaſe than others ſeek their bed.
Not more aghaſt the matrons of renown,
When tyrant Nero burn'd th' imperial town,
Shriek'd for the downfal in a doleful cry,
For which their guiltleſs lords were doom'd to die.
Now to my ſtory I return again:
The trembling widow, and her daughters twain,
This woful cackling cry with horror heard,
Of thoſe diſtracted damſels in the yard;
And ſtarting up beheld the heavy ſight,
How Reynard to the foreſt took his flight,
And croſs his back, as in triumphant ſcorn,
The hope and pillar of the houſe was borne.
The fox, the wicked fox, was all the cry;
Out from his houſe ran every neighbour nigh:
The vicar firſt, and after him the crew
With forks and ſtaves, the felon to purſue.
Ran Coll our dog, and Talbot with the band,
And Malkin, with her diſtaff in her hand;
Ran cow and calf, and family of hogs,
In panic horror of purſuing dogs;
With many a deadly grunt and doleful ſqueak,
Poor ſwine, as if their pretty hearts would break.

The ſhouts of men, the women in diſmay,
With ſhrieks augment the terror of the day.
The ducks that heard the proclamation cry'd,
And fear'd a perſecution might betide,
Full twenty mile from town their voyage take,
Obſcure in ruſhes of the liquid lake.
The geeſe fly o'er the barn; the bees in arms
Drive headlong from their waxen cells in ſwarms.
Jack Straw at London-ſtone, with all his rout,
Struck not the city with ſo loud a ſhout;
Not when with Engliſh hate they did purſue
A Frenchman, or an unbelieving Jew:
Not when the welkin rung with one and all;
And echoes bounded back from Fox's hall:
Earth ſeem'd to ſink beneath, and heaven above to fall.
With might and main they chac'd the murderous fox,
With brazen trumpets, and inflated box,
To kindle Mars with military ſounds,
Nor wanted horns t' inſpire ſagacious hounds.
But ſee how Fortune can confound the wiſe,
And, when they leaſt expect it, turn the dice.
The captive-cock, who ſcarce could draw his breath,
And lay within the very jaws of death;
Yet in this agony his fancy wrought,
And fear ſupply'd him with this happy thought:
Your's is the prize, victorious prince, ſaid he,
The vicar my defeat, and all the village ſee.
Enjoy your friendly fortune while you may,
And bid the churls that envy you the prey

Call

Call back their mungril curs, and ceaſe their cry,
See, fools, the ſhelter of the wood is nigh,
And Chanticleer in your deſpite ſhall die,
He ſhall be pluck'd and eaten to the bone.
'Tis well adviſ'd, in faith it ſhall be done;
This Reynard ſaid: but, as the word he ſpoke,
The priſoner with a ſpring from priſon broke:
Then ſtretch'd his feather'd fans with all his might,
And to the neighbouring maple wing'd his flight;
Whom when the traitor ſafe on tree beheld,
He curs'd the Gods, with ſhame and ſorrow fill'd;
Shame for his folly, ſorrow out of time,
For plotting an unprofitable crime;
Yet, maſtering both, th' artificer of lyes
Renews th' aſſault, and his laſt battery tries.
Though I, ſaid he, did ne'er in thought offend,
How juſtly may my lord ſuſpect his friend!
Th' appearance is againſt me, I confeſs,
Who ſeemingly have put you in diſtreſs:
You, if your goodneſs does not plead my cauſe,
May think I broke all hoſpitable laws,
To bear you from your palace-yard by might,
And put your noble perſon in a fright:
This, ſince you take it ill, I muſt repent,
Though, heaven can witneſs, with no bad intent:
I practis'd it, to make you taſte your cheer
With double pleaſure, firſt prepar'd by fear.
So loyal ſubjects often ſeize their prince,
Forc'd, (for his good) to ſeeming violence,
Yet mean his ſacred perſon not the leaſt offence.

Deſcend; ſo help me Jove as you ſhall find
That Reynard comes of no diſſembling kind.
Nay, quoth the cock; but I beſhrew us both,
If I believe a ſaint upon his oath:
An honeſt man may take a knave's advice,
But idiots only may be cozen'd twice:
Once warn'd is well bewar'd; not flattering lies
Shall ſooth me more to ſing with winking eyes,
And open mouth, for fear of catching flies.
Who blindfold walks upon a river's brim,
When he ſhould ſee, has he deſerv'd to ſwim?
Better, ſir cock, let all contention ceaſe,
Come down, ſaid Reynard, let us treat of peace.
A peace with all my ſoul, ſaid Chanticleer;
But, with your favour, I will treat it here:
And, leſt the truce with treaſon ſhould be mixt,
'Tis my concern to have the tree betwixt.

THE MORAL.

In this plain fable you th' effect may ſee
Of negligence, and fond credulity:
And learn beſides of flatterers to beware,
Then moſt pernicious when they ſpeak too fair.
The cock and fox, the fool and knave imply;
The truth is moral, though the tale a lye.
Who ſpoke in parables, I dare not ſay;
But ſure he knew it was a pleaſing way,
Sound ſenſe, by plain example, to convey.
And in a heathen author we may find,
That pleaſure with inſtruction ſhould be join'd;
So ake the corn, and leave the chaff behind.

THE

THE FLOWER AND THE LEAF:

OR,

THE LADY IN THE ARBOUR.

A VISION.

NOW turning from the wintery ſigns, the ſun
His courſe exalted through the Ram had run,
And, whirling up the ſkies, his chariot drove
Through Taurus and the lightſome realms of love;
Where Venus from her orb deſcends in ſhowers,
To glad the ground, and paint the fields with flowers:
When firſt the tender blades of graſs appear,
And buds, that yet the blaſt of Eurus fear,
Stand at the door of life, and doubt to clothe the year:
Till gentle heat, and ſoft repeated rains,
Make the green blood to dance within their veins:
Then, at their call embolden'd, out they come,
And ſwell the germs, and burſt the narrow room;
Broader and broader yet, their blooms diſplay.
Salute the welcome ſun, and entertain the day.
Then from their breathing ſouls the ſweets repair,
To ſcent the ſkies, and purge th' unwholſome air:
Joy ſpreads the heart, and, with a general ſong,
Spring iſſues out, and leads the jolly months along.

In that ſweet ſeaſon, as in bed I lay,
And ſought in ſleep to paſs the night away,
I turn'd my weary'd ſide, but ſtill in vain,
Though full of youthful health, and void of pain:

Cares I had none, to keep me from my reſt,
For love had never enter'd in my breaſt;
I wanted nothing fortune could ſupply,
Nor did ſhe ſlumber till that hour deny.
I wonder'd then, but after found it true,
Much joy had dry'd away the balmy dew:
Seas would be pools, without the bruſhing air,
To curl the waves: and ſure ſome little care
Should weary nature ſo, to make her want repair.
When Chanticleer the ſecond watch had ſung,
Scorning the ſcorner ſleep, from bed I ſprung;
And, dreſſing, by the moon, in looſe array,
Paſs'd out in open air, preventing day,
And ſought a goodly grove, as fancy led my way.
Straight as a line in beauteous order ſtood
Of oaks unſhorn a venerable wood;
Freſh was the graſs beneath, and every tree
At diſtance planted in a due degree,
Their branching arms in air with equal ſpace
Stretch'd to their neighbours with a long embrace:
And the new leaves on every bough were ſeen,
Some ruddy colour'd, ſome of lighter green.
The painted birds, companions of the ſpring,
Hopping from ſpray to ſpray, were heard to ſing.
Both eyes and ears receiv'd a like delight,
Enchanting muſic, and a charming ſight.
On Philomel I fix'd my whole deſire;
And liſten'd for the queen of all the quire;
Fain would I hear her heavenly voice to ſing;
And wanted yet an omen to the ſpring.

Attending

Attending long in vain, I took the way,
Which through a path but ſcarcely printed lay;
In narrow mazes oft it ſeem'd to meet,
And look'd as lightly preſs'd by fairy feet.
Wandering I walk'd alone, for ſtill methought
To ſome ſtrange end ſo ſtrange a path was wrought:
At laſt it led me where an arbour ſtood,
The ſacred receptacle of the wood:
This place unmark'd, though oft I walk'd the green,
In all my progreſs I had never ſeen:
And, ſeiz'd at once with wonder and delight,
Gaz'd all around me, new to the tranſporting ſight.
'Twas bench'd with turf, and goodly to be ſeen,
The thick young graſs aroſe in freſher green:
The mound was newly made, no ſight could paſs
Betwixt the nice partitions of the graſs;
The well-united ſods ſo cloſely lay;
And all around the ſhades defended it from day:
For ſycamores with eglantine were ſpread,
A hedge about the ſides, a covering over head.
And ſo the fragrant brier was wove between,
The ſycamore and flowers were mix'd with green,
That nature ſeem'd to vary the delight;
And ſatisfy'd at once the ſmell and ſight.
The maſter workman of the bower was known
Through fairy-lands, and built for Oberon;
Who twining leaves with ſuch proportion drew,
They roſe by meaſure, and by rule they grew;
No mortal tongue can half the beauty tell:
For none but hands divine could work ſo well.

Both

Both roof and ſides were like a parlour made,
A ſoft receſs, and a cool ſummer ſhade;
The hedge was ſet ſo thick, no foreign eye
The perſons plac'd within it could eſpy:
But all that paſs'd without with eaſe was ſeen,
As if nor fence nor tree was plac'd between.
'Twas border'd with a field; and ſome was plain
With graſs, and ſome was ſow'd with riſing grain.
That (now the dew with ſpangles deck'd the ground)
A ſweeter ſpot of earth was never found.
I look'd and look'd, and ſtill with new delight;
Such joy my ſoul, ſuch pleaſures fill'd my ſight:
And the freſh eglantine exhal'd a breath,
Whoſe odours were of power to raiſe from death.
Nor ſullen diſcontent, nor anxious care,
Ev'n though brought thither, could inhabit there:
But thence they fled as from their mortal foe;
For this ſweet place could only pleaſure know.
Thus as I mus'd, I caſt aſide my eye,
And ſaw a medlar-tree was planted nigh.
The ſpreading branches made a goodly ſhow,
And full of opening blooms was every bough:
A goldfinch there I ſaw with gawdy pride
Of painted plumes, that hopp'd from ſide to ſide,
Still pecking as ſhe paſs'd; and ſtill ſhe drew
The ſweets from every flower, and ſuck'd the dew:
Suffic'd at length, ſhe warbled in her throat,
And tun'd her voice to many a merry note,
But indiſtinct, and neither ſweet nor clear,
Yet ſuch as ſooth'd my ſoul, and pleas'd my ear.

Her

Her ſhort performance was no ſooner try'd,
When ſhe I ſought, the nightingale, reply'd:
So ſweet, ſo ſhrill, ſo variouſly ſhe ſung,
That the grove echoed, and the valleys rung:
And I ſo raviſh'd with her heavenly note,
I ſtood intranc'd, and had no room for thought,
But, all o'er-power'd with ecſtaſy of bliſs,
Was in a pleaſing dream of paradiſe;
At length I wak'd, and, looking round the bower,
Search'd every tree, and pry'd on every flower,
If any-where by chance I might eſpy,
The rural poet of the melody:
For ſtill methought ſhe ſung not far away:
At laſt I found her on a laurel ſpray.
Cloſe by my ſide ſhe ſat, and fair in ſight,
Full in a line againſt her oppoſite;
Where ſtood with eglantine the laurel twin'd;
And both their native ſweets were well conjoin'd.
On the green bank I ſat, and liſten'd long
(Sitting was more convenient for the ſong):
Nor till her lay was ended could I move,
But wiſh'd to dwell for ever in the grove.
Only methought the time too ſwiftly paſs'd,
And every note I fear'd would be the laſt.
My ſight, and ſmell, and hearing, were employ'd,
And all three ſenſes in full guſt enjoy'd.
And what alone did all the reſt ſurpaſs,
The ſweet poſſeſſion of the fairy place;
Single, and conſcious to myſelf alone
Of pleaſures to th' excluded world unknown:

Pleaſures

Pleaſures which no where elſe were to be found,
And all Elyſium in a ſpot of ground.
Thus while I ſat intent to ſee and hear,
And drew perfumes of more than vital air,
All ſuddenly I heard th' approaching ſound
Of vocal muſic, on th' inchanted ground:
An hoſt of ſaints it ſeem'd, ſo full the quire;
As if the bleſs'd above did all conſpire
To join their voices, and neglect the lyre.
At length there iſſued from the grove behind
A fair aſſembly of the female kind:
A train leſs fair, as ancient fathers tell,
Seduc'd the ſons of heaven to rebel.
I paſs their form, and every charming grace,
Leſs than an angel would their worth debaſe:
But their attire, like liveries of a kind
All rich and rare, is freſh within my mind.
In velvet white as ſnow the troop was gown'd,
The ſeams with ſparkling emeralds ſet around:
Their hoods and ſleeves the ſame; and purfled o'er
With diamonds, pearls, and all the ſhining ſtore
Of eaſtern pomp: their long deſcending train,
With rubies edg'd, and ſapphires, ſwept the plain:
High on their heads, with jewels richly ſet,
Each lady wore a radiant coronet.
Beneath the circles, all the quire was grac'd
With chaplets green on their fair foreheads plac'd.
Of laurel ſome, of woodbine many more;
And wreaths of Agnus caſtus others bore:

Theſe

Theſe laſt, who with thoſe virgin crowns were dreſs'd,
Appear'd in higher honour than the reſt.
They danc'd around: but in the midſt was ſeen
A lady of a more majeſtic mien;
By ſtature and by beauty mark'd their ſovereign queen.
She in the midſt began with ſober grace;
Her ſervant's eyes were fix'd upon her face,
And, as ſhe mov'd or turn'd, her motions view'd,
Her meaſures kept, and ſtep by ſtep purſued.
Methought ſhe trod the ground with greater grace,
With more of godhead ſhining in her face;
And as in beauty ſhe ſurpaſs'd the quire,
So, nobler than the reſt, was her attire.
A crown of ruddy gold inclos'd her brow,
Plain without pomp, and rich without a ſhow:
A branch of Agnus caſtus in her hand
She bore aloft (her ſceptre of command);
Admir'd, ador'd by all the circling crowd,
For whereſoe'er ſhe turn'd her face, they bow'd:
And as ſhe danc'd, a roundelay ſhe ſung,
In honour of the laurel, ever young:
She rais'd her voice on high, and ſung ſo clear,
The fawns came ſcudding from the groves to hear:
And all the bending foreſt lent an ear.
At every cloſe ſhe made, th' attending throng
Reply'd, and bore the burden of the ſong:
So juſt, ſo ſmall, yet in ſo ſweet a note,
It ſeem'd the muſic melted in the throat.
Thus dancing on, and ſinging as they danc'd,
They to the middle of the mead advanc'd,

Till

Till round my arbour a new ring they made,
And footed it about the ſecret ſhade.
O'erjoy'd to ſee the jolly troop ſo near,
But ſomewhat aw'd, I ſhook with holy fear;
Yet not ſo much, but that I noted well
Who did the moſt in ſong or dance excel.
Not long I had obſerv'd, when from afar
I heard a ſudden ſymphony of war;
The neighing courſers, and the ſoldiers cry,
And ſounding trumps that ſeem'd to tear the ſky:
I ſaw ſoon after this, behind the grove
From whence the ladies did in order move,
Come iſſuing out in arms a warrior train,
That like a deluge pour'd upon the plain:
On barbed ſteeds they rode in proud array,
Thick as the college of the bees in May,
When ſwarming o'er the duſky fields they fly,
New to the flowers, and intercept the ſky.
So fierce they drove, their courſers were ſo fleet,
That the turf trembled underneath their feet.
To tell their coſtly furniture were long,
The ſummer's day would end before the ſong:
To purchaſe but the tenth of all their ſtore,
Would make the mighty Perſian monarch poor.
Yet what I can, I will; before the reſt
The trumpets iſſued in white mantles dreſs'd:
A numerous troop, and all their heads around
With chaplets green of cerrial-oak were crown'd.
And at each trumpet was a banner bound;

Which.

Which waving in the wind diſplay'd at large
Their maſter's coat of arms, and knightly charge.
Broad were the banners, and of ſnowy hue,
A purer web the ſilk-worm never drew.
The chief about their necks the ſcutcheons wore,
With orient pearls and jewels powder'd o'er:
Broad were their collars too, and every one
Was ſet about with many a coſtly ſtone.
Next theſe of kings at arms a goodly train
In proud array came pranſing o'er the plain:
Their cloaks were cloth of ſilver mix'd with gold,
And garlands green around their temples roll'd:
Rich crowns were on their royal ſcutcheons plac'd,
With ſapphires, diamonds, and with rubies grac'd:
And as the trumpets their appearance made,
So theſe in habits were alike array'd;
But with a pace more ſober, and more ſlow;
And twenty, rank in rank, they rode a row.
The purſuivants came next, in number more;
And like the heralds each his ſcutcheon bore:
Clad in white velvet all their troop they led,
With each an oaken chaplet on his head.
Nine royal knights in equal rank ſucceed,
Each warrior mounted on a fiery ſteed:
In golden armour glorious to behold;
The rivets of their arms were nail'd with gold.
Their ſurcoats of white ermin fur were made,
With cloth of gold between, that caſt a glittering ſhade;
The trappings of their ſteeds were of the ſame;
The golden fringe ev'n ſet the ground on flame,

And

And drew a precious trail: a crown divine
Of laurel did about their temples twine.
Three henchmen were for every knight aſſign'd,
All in rich livery clad, and of a kind:
White velvet, but unſhorn, for cloaks they wore,
And each within his hand a truncheon bore:
The foremoſt held a helm of rare device;
A prince's ranſom would not pay the price.
The ſecond bore the buckler of his knight,
The third of cornel-wood a ſpear upright,
Headed with piercing ſteel, and poliſh'd bright.
Like to their lords their equipage was ſeen,
And all their foreheads crown'd with garlands green.
And after theſe came, arm'd with ſpear and ſhield,
An hoſt ſo great, as cover'd all the field,
And all their foreheads, like the knights before,
With laurels ever-green were ſhaded o'er,
Or oak, or other leaves of laſting kind,
Tenacious of the ſtem, and firm againſt the wind.
Some in their hands, beſide the lance and ſhield,
The boughs of woodbine or of hawthorn held,
Or branches for their myſtic emblems took,
Of palm, of laurel, or of cerrial oak.
Thus marching to the trumpet's lofty ſound,
Drawn in two lines adverſe they wheel'd around,
And in the middle meadow took their ground.
Among themſelves the turney they divide,
In equal ſquadrons rang'd on either ſide.
Then turn'd their horſes heads, and man to man,
And ſteed to ſteed oppos'd, the juſts began.

They

They lightly ſet their lances in the reſt,
And, at the ſign, againſt each other preſs'd:
They met. I ſitting at my eaſe beheld
The mix'd events, and fortunes of the field.
Some broke their ſpears, ſome tumbled horſe and man,
And round the field the lighten'd courſers ran.
An hour and more, like tides, in equal ſway
They ruſh'd, and won by turns, and loſt the day:
At length the nine (who ſtill together held)
Their fainting foes to ſhameful fight compel'd,
And with reſiſtleſs force o'er-ran the field.
Thus, to their fame, when finiſh'd was the fight,
The victors from their lofty ſteeds alight:
Like them diſmounted all the warlike train,
And two by two proceeded o'er the plain:
Till to the fair aſſembly they advanc'd,
Who near the ſecret arbour ſung and danc'd.
The ladies left their meaſures at the ſight,
To meet the chiefs returning from the fight,
And each with open arms embrac'd her choſen knight.
Amid the plain a ſpreading laurel ſtood,
The grace and ornament of all the wood:
That pleaſing ſhade they ſought, a ſoft retreat
From ſudden April ſhowers, a ſhelter from the heat:
Her leafy arms with ſuch extent were ſpread,
So near the clouds was her aſpiring head,
That hoſts of birds, that wing the liquid air,
Perch'd in the boughs, had nightly lodging there:
And flocks of ſheep beneath the ſhade from far
Might hear the rattling hail, and wintery war;

From Heaven's inclemency here found retreat,
Enjoy'd the cool, and ſhunn'd the ſcorching heat:
A hundred knights might there at eaſe abide;
And every knight a lady by his ſide:
The trunk itſelf ſuch odours did bequeath,
That a Moluccan breeze to theſe was common breath.
The lords and ladies here, approaching, paid
Their homage, with a low obeiſance made;
And ſeem'd to venerate the ſacred ſhade.
Theſe rites perform'd, their pleaſures they purſue,
With ſong of love, and mix with pleaſures new;
Around the holy tree their dance they frame,
And every champion leads his choſen dame.
I caſt my ſight upon the farther field,
And a freſh object of delight beheld:
For from the region of the Weſt I heard
New muſic ſound, and a new troop appear'd;
Of knights, and ladies mix'd, a jolly band,
But all on foot they march'd, and hand in hand.
The ladies dreſs'd in rich ſymars were ſeen
Of Florence ſattin, flower'd with white and green,
And for a ſhade betwixt the bloomy gridelin.
The borders of their petticoats below
Were guarded thick with rubies on a row;
And every damſel wore upon her head
Of flowers a garland blended white and red.
Attir'd in mantles all the knights were ſeen,
That gratify'd the view with chearful green:
Their chaplets of their ladies colours were,
Compos'd of white and red, to ſhade their ſhining hair.

Before

Before the merry troop the minſtrels play'd;
All in their maſter's liveries were array'd,
And clad in green, and on their temples wore
The chaplets white and red their ladies bore.
Their inſtruments were various in their kind,
Some for the bow, and ſome for breathing wind:
The ſawtry, pipe, and hautboy's noiſy band,
And the ſoft lute trembling beneath the touching hand.
A tuft of daiſies on a flowery lay
They ſaw, and thitherward they bent their way;
To this both knights and dames their homage made,
And due obeiſance to the daiſy paid.
And then the band of flutes began to play,
To which a lady ſung a virelay:
And ſtill at every cloſe ſhe would repeat
The burden of the ſong, "The daiſy is ſo ſweet."
The daiſy is ſo ſweet, when ſhe begun,
The troop of knights and dames continued on.
The concert and the voice ſo charm'd my ear,
And ſooth'd my ſoul, that it was heaven to hear.
But ſoon their pleaſure paſs'd: at noon of day,
The ſun with ſultry beams began to play:
Not Sirius ſhoots a fiercer flame from high,
When with his poiſonous breath he blaſts the ſky:
Then droop'd the fading flowers (their beauty fled)
And clos'd their ſickly eyes, and hung the head;
And, rivel'd up with heat, lay dying in their bed.
The ladies gaſp'd, and ſcarcely could reſpire;
The breath they drew, no longer air, but fire;

The fainty knights were ſcorch'd; and knew not whese
To run for ſhelter, for no ſhade was near;
And after this the gathering clouds amain
Pour'd down a ſtorm of rattling hail and rain:
And lightning flaſh'd betwixt: the field, and flowers,
Burnt up before, were buried in the ſhowers.
The ladies and the knights, no ſhelter nigh,
Bare to the weather and the wintery ſky,
Were dropping wet, diſconſolate, and wan,
And through their thin array receiv'd the rain;
While thoſe in white protected by the tree
Saw paſs in vain th' aſſault, and ſtood from danger free.
But as compaſſion mov'd their gentle minds,
When ceas'd the ſtorm, and ſilent were the winds,
Diſpleas'd at what, not ſuffering, they had ſeen,
They went to cheer the faction of the green:
The queen in white array, before her band,
Saluting, took her rival by the hand;
So did the knights and dames, with courtly grace,
And with behaviour ſweet their foes embrace,
Then thus the queen with laurel on her brow,
Fair ſiſter, I have ſuffer'd in your woe;
Nor ſhall be wanting aught within my power
For your relief in my refreſhing bower.
That other anſwer'd with a lowly look,
And ſoon the gracious invitation took:
For ill at eaſe both ſhe and all her train
The ſcorching ſun had borne, and beating rain.
Like courteſy was us'd by all in white,
Each dame a dame receiv'd, and every kinght a knight.

The

The laurel champions with their ſwords invade
The neighbouring foreſts, where the juſts were made,
And ſerewood from the rotten hedges took,
And ſeeds of latent fire from flints provoke:
A chearful blaze aroſe, and by the fire
They warm'd their frozen feet, and dry'd their wet attire.
Refreſh'd with heat, the ladies ſought around
For virtuous herbs, which gather'd from the ground
They ſqueez'd the juice, and cooling ointment made,
Which on their ſun-burnt cheeks and their chapt ſkins they laid:
Then ſought green ſalads, which they bade them eat,
A ſovereign remedy for inward heat.
The lady of the leaf ordain'd a feaſt,
And made the lady of the flower her gueſt:
When lo, a bower aſcended on the plain,
With ſudden ſeats ordain'd, and large for either train.
This bower was near my pleaſant arbour plac'd,
That I could hear and ſee whatever paſs'd:
The ladies ſat with each a knight between,
Diſtinguiſh'd by their colours, white and green;
The vanquiſh'd party with the victors join'd,
Nor wanted ſweet diſcourſe, the banquet of the mind.
Mean time the minſtrels play'd on either ſide,
Vain of their art, and for the maſtery vy'd:
The ſweet contention laſted for an hour,
And reach'd my ſecret arbour from the bower.
The ſun was ſet; and Veſper, to ſupply
His abſent beams, had lighted up the ſky:

When Philomel officious all the day
To ſing the ſervice of th' enſuing May,
Fled from her laurel ſhade, and wing'd her flight
Directly to the queen array'd in white:
And hopping ſat familiar on her hand,
A new muſician, and increas'd the band.
The goldfinch, who, to ſhun the ſcalding heat,
Had chang'd the medlar for a ſafer ſeat,
And hid in buſhes 'ſcap'd the bitter ſhower,
Now perch'd upon the lady of the flower;
And either ſongſter holding out their throats,
And folding up their wings, renew'd their notes:
As if all day, preluding to the fight,
They only had rehears'd, to ſing by night:
The banquet ended, and the battle done,
They danc'd by ſtar-light and the friendly moon:
And when they were to part, the laureat queen
Supply'd with ſteeds the lady of the green,
Her and her train conducting on the way,
The moon to follow, and avoid the day.
This when I ſaw, inquiſitive to know
The ſecret moral of the myſtic ſhow,
I ſtarted from my ſhade, in hopes to find
Some nymph to ſatisfy my longing mind:
And as my fair adventure fell, I found
A lady all in white, with laurel crown'd,
Who clos'd the rear, and ſoftly pac'd along,
Repeating to herſelf the former ſong.
With due reſpect my body I inclin'd,
As to ſome being of ſuperior kind,

And made my court according to the day,
Wiſhing her queen and her a happy May.
Great thanks, my daughter, with a gracious bow,
She ſaid; and I, who much deſir'd to know
Of whence ſhe was, yet fearful how to break
My mind, adventur'd humbly thus to ſpeak:
Madam, might I preſume and not offend,
So may the ſtars and ſhining moon attend
Your nightly ſports, as you vouchſafe to tell
What nymphs they were who mortal forms excel,
And what the knights who fought in liſted fields ſo well.
To this the dame reply'd: Fair daughter, know,
That what you ſaw was all a fairy ſhow:
And all thoſe airy ſhapes you now behold,
Were human bodies once, and cloth'd with earthly mold,
Our ſouls, not yet prepar'd for upper light,
Till doomſday wander in the ſhades of night;
This only holiday of all the year,
We privileg'd in ſunſhine may appear:
With ſongs and dance we celebrate the day,
And with due honours uſher in the May.
At other times we reign by night alone,
And poſting through the ſkies purſue the moon:
But when the morn ariſes, none are found;
For cruel Demogorgon walks the round,
And if he finds a fairy lag in light,
He drives the wretch before, and laſhes into night.
All courteous are by kind; and ever proud
With friendly offices to help the good.

In every land we have a larger ſpace
Than what is known to you of mortal race:
Where we with green adorn our fairy bowers,
And ev'n this grove, unſeen before, is ours.
Know farther; every lady cloth'd in white,
And, crown'd with oak and laurel every knight,
Are ſervants to the leaf, by liveries known
Of innocence; and I myſelf am one.
Saw you not her ſo graceful to behold
In white attire, and crown'd with radiant gold?
The ſovereign lady of our land is ſhe,
Diana call'd, the queen of chaſtity:
And, for the ſpotleſs name of maid ſhe bears,
That Agnus caſtus in her hand appears;
And all her train, with leafy chaplets crown'd,
Were for unblam'd virginity renown'd;
But thoſe the chief and higheſt in command
Who bear thoſe holy branches in their hand:
The knights adorn'd with laurel crowns are they,
Whom death nor danger never could diſmay,
Victorious names, who made the world obey:
Who, while they liv'd, in deeds of arms excell'd,
And after death for deities were held.
But thoſe, who wear the woodbine on their brow,
Were knights of love, who never broke their vow;
Firm to their plighted faith, and ever free
From fears, and fickle chance, and jealouſy.
The lords and ladies, who the woodbine bear,
As true as Triſtram and Iſotta were.

But

But what are thoſe, ſaid I, th' unconquer'd nine,
Who crown'd with laurel-wreaths in golden armour ſhine?
And who the knights in green, and what the train
Of ladies dreſs'd with daiſies on the plain?
Why both the bands in worſhip diſagree,
And ſome adore the flower, and ſome the tree?
Juſt is your ſuit, fair daughter, ſaid the dame:
Thoſe laurel'd chiefs were men of mighty fame;
Nine worthies were they call'd of different rites,
Three jews, three pagans, and three chriſtian knights.
Theſe, as you ſee, ride foremoſt in the field,
As they the foremoſt rank of honour held,
And all in deeds of chivalry excel'd:
Their temples wreath'd with leaves, that ſtill renew;
For deathleſs laurel is the victor's due:
Who bear the bows were knights in Arthur's reign,
Twelve they, and twelve the peers of Charlemain:
For bows the ſtrength of brawny arms imply,
Emblems of valour and of victory.
Behold an order yet of newer date,
Doubling their number, equal in their ſtate;
Our England's ornament, the crown's defence,
In battle brave, protectors of their prince:
Unchang'd by fortune, to their ſovereign true,
For which their manly legs are bound with blue.
Theſe, of the garter call'd, of faith unſtain'd,
In fighting fields the laurel have obtain'd,
And well repaid the honours which they gain'd.
The laurel wreaths were firſt by Cæſar worn,
And ſtill they Cæſar's ſucceſſors adorn:

One

One leaf of this is immortality,
And more of worth than all the world can buy.
One doubt remains, ſaid I, the dames in green,
What were their qualities, and who their queen?
Flora commands, ſaid ſhe, thoſe nymphs and knights,
Who liv'd in ſlothful eaſe and looſe delights;
Who never acts of honour durſt purſue,
The men inglorious knights, the ladies all untrue:
Who, nurs'd in idleneſs, and train'd in courts,
Paſs'd all their precious hours in plays and ſports,
Till death behind came ſtalking on, unſeen,
And wither'd (like the ſtorm) the freſhneſs of their green
Theſe, and their mates, enjoy their preſent hour,
And therefore pay their homage to the flower.
But knights in knightly deeds ſhould perſevere,
And ſtill continue what at firſt they were;
Continue, and proceed in honour's fair career.
No room for cowardice, or dull delay;
From good to better they ſhould urge their way.
For this with golden ſpurs the chiefs are grac'd,
With pointed rowels arm'd to mend their haſte;
For this with laſting leaves their brows are bound;
For laurel is the ſign of labour crown'd,
Which bears the bitter blaſt, nor ſhaken falls to ground:
From winter winds it ſuffers no decay,
For ever freſh and fair, and every month is May.
Ev'n when the vital ſap retreats below,
Ev'n when the hoary head is hid in ſnow;
The life is in the leaf, and ſtill between
The fits of falling ſnow appears the ſtreaky green.

Not

Not ſo the flower, which laſts for little ſpace,
A ſhort-liv'd good, and an uncertain grace;
This way and that the feeble ſtem is driven,
Weak to ſuſtain the ſtorms and injuries of heaven.
Propp'd by the ſpring, it lifts aloft the head,
But of a ſickly beauty, ſoon to ſhed;
In ſummer living, and in winter dead.
For things of tender kind, for pleaſure made,
Shoot up with ſwift increaſe, and ſudden are decay'd.
With humble words, the wiſeſt I could frame,
And proffer'd ſervice, I repaid the dame;
That, of her grace, ſhe gave her maid to know
The ſecret meaning of this moral ſhow.
And ſhe, to prove what profit I had made
Of myſtic truth, in fables firſt convey'd,
Demanded till the next returning May,
Whether the leaf or flower I would obey?
I choſe the leaf; ſhe ſmil'd with ſober chear,
And wiſh'd me fair adventure for the year,
And gave me charms and ſigils, for defence
Againſt ill tongues that ſcandal innocence:
But I, ſaid ſhe, my fellows muſt purſue,
Already paſt the plain, and out of view.
We parted thus; I homeward ſped my way,
Bewilder'd in the wood till dawn of day:
And met the merry crew who danc'd about the May.
Then late refreſh'd with ſleep, I roſe to write
The viſionary vigils of the night:
Bluſh, as thou may'ſt, my little book, with ſhame,
Nor hope with homely verſe to purchaſe fame;
For ſuch thy Maker choſe: and ſo deſign'd
Thy ſimple ſtile to ſuit thy lowly kind.

THE

THE WIFE OF BATH,

HER TALE.

IN days of old, when Arthur fill'd the throne,
Whoſe acts and fame to foreign lands were blown;
The king of elfs and little fairy queen
Gambol'd on heaths, and danc'd on every green;
And where the jolly troop had led the round,
The graſs unbidden roſe, and mark'd the ground:
Nor darkling did they glance, the ſilver light
Of Phœbe ſerv'd to guide their ſteps aright,
And, with their tripping pleas'd, prolong the night.
Her beams they follow'd, where at full ſhe plaid,
Nor longer than ſhe ſhed her horns they ſtaid,
From thence with airy flight to foreign lands convey'd.
Above the reſt our Britain held they dear,
More ſolemnly they kept their ſabbaths here,
And made more ſpacious rings, and revel'd half the year.
I ſpeak of ancient times, for now the ſwain
Returning late may paſs the woods in vain,
And never hope to ſee the nightly train:
In vain the dairy now with mint is dreſs'd,
The dairy-maid expects no fairy gueſt,
To ſkim the bowls, and after pay the feaſt.
She ſighs, and ſhakes her empty ſhoes in vain,
No ſilver penny to reward her pain:
For prieſts, with prayers and other goodly géer,
Have made the merry goblins diſappear;

And where they play'd their merry pranks before,
Have ſprinkled holy water on the floor:
And friars that through the wealthy regions run,
Thick as the motes that twinkle in the ſun,
Reſort to farmers rich, and bleſs their halls,
And exorciſe the beds, and croſs the walls:
This makes the fairy quires forſake the place,
When once 'tis hallow'd with the rites of grace:
But in the walks where wicked elves have been,
The learning of the pariſh now is ſeen,
The midnight parſon poſting o'er the green,
With gown tuck'd up, to wakes, for Sunday next,
With humming ale encouraging his text;
Nor wants the holy leer to country-girl betwixt.
From fiends and imps he ſets the village free,
There haunts not any incubus but he.
The maids and women need no danger fear
To walk by night, and ſanctity ſo near:
For by ſome haycock, or ſome ſhady thorn,
He bids his beads both even ſong and morn.
  It ſo befel in this king Arthur's reign,
A luſty knight was pricking o'er the plain;
A bachelor he was, and of the courtly train.
It happen'd, as he rode, a damſel gay
In ruſſet robes to market took her way:
Soon on the girl he caſt an amorous eye,
So ſtraight ſhe walk'd, and on her paſterns high:
If ſeeing her behind he lik'd her pace,
Now turning ſhort, he better likes her face.

He lights in haſte, and, full of youthful fire,
By force accompliſh'd his obſcene deſire:
This done, away he rode, not uneſpy'd,
For ſwarming at his back the country cry'd:
And once in view they never loſt the ſight,
But ſeiz'd, and pinion'd brought to court the knight.
Then courts of kings were held in high renown,
Ere made the common brothels of the town:
There, virgins honourable vows receiv'd,
But chaſte as maids in monaſteries liv'd:
The king himſelf, to nuptial ties a ſlave,
No bad example to his poets gave:
And they, not bad, but in a vicious age,
Had not, to pleaſe the prince, debauch'd the ſtage.
Now what ſhould Arthur do? He lov'd the knight,
But ſovereign monarchs are the ſource of right:
Mov'd by the damſel's tears and common cry,
He doom'd the brutal raviſher to die.
But fair Geneura roſe in his defence,
And pray'd ſo hard for mercy from the prince,
That to his queen the king th' offender gave,
And left it in her power to kill or ſave:
This gracious act the ladies all approve,
Who thought it much a man ſhould die for love;
And with their miſtreſs join'd in cloſe debate
(Covering their kindneſs with diſſembled hate),
If not to free him, to prolong his fate.
At laſt agreed they call'd him by conſent
Before the queen and female parliament.

And

And the fair ſpeaker riſing from the chair,
Did thus the judgment of the houſe declare.
Sir knight, though I have aſk'd thy life, yet ſtill
Thy deſtiny depends upon my will:
Nor haſt thou other ſurety than the grace
Not due to thee from our offended race.
But as our kind is of a ſofter mold,
And cannot blood without a ſigh behold,
I grant thee life; reſerving ſtill the power
To take the forfeit when I ſee my hour:
Unleſs thy anſwer to my next demand
Shall ſet thee free from our avenging hand.
The queſtion, whoſe ſolution I require,
Is, What the ſex of women moſt deſire?
In this diſpute thy judges are at ſtrife;
Beware; for on thy wit depends thy life.
Yet (leſt, ſurpriz'd, unknowing what to ſay,
Thou damn thyſelf) we give thee farther day:
A year is thine to wander at thy will;
And learn from others, if thou want'ſt the ſkill.
But, not to hold our proffer turn'd in ſcorn,
Good ſureties will we have for thy return;
That at the time prefix'd thou ſhalt obey,
And at thy pledge's peril keep thy day.
Woe was the knight at this ſevere command;
But well he knew 'twas bootleſs to withſtand:
The terms accepted as the fair ordain,
He put in bail for his return again,
And promis'd anſwer at the day aſſign'd,
The beſt, with heaven's aſſiſtance, he could find.

His

His leave thus taken, on his way he went
With heavy heart, and full of diſcontent,
Miſdoubting much, and fearful of th' event.
'Twas hard the truth of ſuch a point to find,
As 'was not yet agreed among the kind.
Thus on he went; ſtill anxious more and more,
Aſk'd all he met, and knock'd at every door;
Enquir'd of men; but made his chief requeſt
To learn from women what they lov'd the beſt.
They anſwer'd each according to her mind
To pleaſe herſelf, not all the female kind.
One was for wealth, another was for place:
Crones, old and ugly, wiſh'd a better face.
The widow's wiſh was oftentimes to wed;
The wanton maids were all for ſport a-bed.
Some ſaid the ſex were pleas'd with handſome lies,
And ſome groſs flattery lov'd without diſguiſe:
Truth is, ſays one, he ſeldom fails to win
Who flatters well; for that's our darling ſin;
But long attendance, and a duteous mind,
Will work ev'n with the wiſeſt of the kind.
One thought the ſex's prime felicity
Was from the bonds of wedlock to be free:
Their pleaſures, hours, and actions, all their own,
And uncontrol'd to give account to none.
Some wiſh a huſband-fool; but ſuch are curſt,
For fools perverſe of huſbands are the worſt:
All women would be counted chaſte and wiſe,
Nor ſhould our ſpouſes ſee, but with our eyes;

For

For fools will prate; and though they want the wit
To find cloſe faults, yet open blots will hit:
Though better for their eaſe to hold their tongue,
For woman-kind was never in the wrong.
So noiſe enſues, and quarrels laſt for life;
The wife abhors the fool, the fool the wife.
And ſome men ſay that great delight have we,
To be for truth extoll'd, and ſecrecy:
And conſtant in one purpoſe ſtill to dwell;
And not our huſbands counſels to reveal.
But that's a fable: for our ſex is frail,
Inventing rather than not tell a tale.
Like leaky ſieves no ſecrets we can hold:
Witneſs the famous tale that Ovid told.
Midas the king, as in his book appears,
By Phœbus was endow'd with aſs's ears,
Which under his long locks he well conceal'd,
(As monarchs vices muſt not be reveal'd)
For fear the people have them in the wind,
Who long ago were neither dumb nor blind:
Nor apt to think from heaven their title ſprings,
Since Jove and Mars left off begetting kings.
This Midas knew: and durſt communicate
To none but to his wife his ears of ſtate:
One muſt be truſted, and he thought her fit,
As paſſing prudent, and a parlous wit.
To this ſagacious confeſſor he went,
And told her what a gift the Gods had ſent;
But told it under matrimonial ſeal,
With ſtrict injunction never to reveal.

The ſecret heard, ſhe plighted him her troth,
(And ſacred ſure is every woman's oath)
The royal malady ſhould reſt unknown,
Both for her huſband's honour and her own;
But ne'ertheleſs ſhe pin'd with diſcontent;
The counſel rumbled till it found a vent.
The thing ſhe knew ſhe was oblig'd to hide;
By intereſt and by oath the wife was ty'd;
But if ſhe told it not, the woman dy'd.
Loth to betray a huſband and a prince,
But ſhe muſt burſt, or blab; and no pretence
Of honour ty'd her tongue from ſelf-defence.
A marſhy ground commodiouſly was near,
Thither ſhe ran, and held her breath for fear,
Leſt if a word ſhe ſpoke of any thing,
That word might be the ſecret of the king.
Thus full of counſel to the fen ſhe went,
Grip'd all the way, and longing for a vent;
Arriv'd, by pure neceſſity compel'd,
On her majeſtic marrow-bones ſhe kneel'd:
Then to the water's brink ſhe laid her head,
And, as a bittour bumps within a reed,
To thee alone, O lake, ſhe ſaid, I tell,
(And, as thy queen, command thee to conceal):
Beneath his locks the king my huſband wears
A goodly royal pair of aſs's ears.
Now I have eas'd my boſom of the pain,
Till the next longing fit return again.
Thus through a woman was the ſecret known;
Tell us, and in effect you tell the town.

But

But to my tale: The knight with heavy cheer,
Wandering in vain, had now conſum'd the year;
One day was only left to ſolve the doubt,
Yet knew no more than when he firſt ſet out.
But home he muſt, and, as th' award had been,
Yield up his body captive to the queen.
In this deſpairing ſtate he hapt to ride,
As fortune led him, by a foreſt ſide:
Lonely the vale, and full of horror ſtood,
Brown with the ſhade of a religious wood:
When full before him at the noon of night,
(The moon was up, and ſhot a gleamy light)
He ſaw a quire of ladies in a round,
That featly footing ſeem'd to ſkim the ground:
Thus dancing hand in hand, ſo light they were,
He knew not where they trod, on earth or air.
At ſpeed he drove, and came a ſudden gueſt,
In hope where many women were, at leaſt,
Some one by chance might anſwer his requeſt.
But faſter than his horſe the ladies flew,
And in a trice were vaniſh'd out of view.
One only hag remain'd: but fouler far
Than grandame apes in Indian foreſts are;
Againſt a wither'd oak ſhe lean'd her weight,
Propp'd on her truſty ſtaff, not half upright.
And dropp'd an aukward court'ſy to the knight.
Then ſaid, what makes you, Sir, ſo late abroad
Without a guide, and this no beaten road?
Or want you aught that here you hope to find,
Or travel for ſome trouble in your mind?

The laſt I gueſs; and if I read aright,
Thoſe of our ſex are bound to ſerve a knight;
Perhaps good counſel may your grief aſſuage,
Then tell your pain; for wiſdom is in age.
To this the knight: Good mother, would you know
The ſecret cauſe and ſpring of all my woe?
My life muſt with to-morrow's light expire,
Unleſs I tell what women moſt deſire.
Now could you help me at this hard eſſay,
Or for your inborn goodneſs, or for pay;
Yours is my life, redeem'd by your advice,
Aſk what you pleaſe, and I will pay the price.
The proudeſt kerchief of the court ſhall reſt
Well ſatisfy'd of what they love the beſt.
Plight me thy faith, quoth ſhe, that what I aſk,
Thy danger over, and perform'd thy taſk,
That thou ſhalt give for hire of thy demand;
Here take thy oath, and ſeal it on my hand;
I warrant thee, on peril of my life,
Thy words ſhall pleaſe both widow, maid, and wife.
More words there needed not to move the knight,
To take her offer, and his truth to plight.
With that ſhe ſpread a mantle on the ground,
And, firſt inquiring whither he was bound,
Bade him not fear, though long and rough the way,
At court he ſhould arrive ere break of day;
His horſe ſhould find the way without a guide.
She ſaid: with fury they began to ride,
He on the midſt, the beldam at his ſide.

The horſe, what devil drove I cannot tell,
But only this, they ſped their journey well:
And all the way the crone inform'd the knight,
How he ſhould anſwer the demand aright.
To court they came; the news was quickly ſpread
Of his returning to redeem his head.
The female ſenate was aſſembled ſoon
With all the mob of women of the town:
The queen ſate lord chief juſtice of the hall,
And bade the crier cite the criminal,
The knight appear'd; and ſilence they proclaim:
Then firſt the culprit anſwer'd to his name:
And, after forms of law, was laſt requir'd
To name the thing that women moſt deſir'd.
Th' offender, taught his leſſon by the way,
And by his counſel order'd what to ſay,
Thus bold began: My lady liege, ſaid he,
What all your ſex deſire is ſovereignty.
The wife affects her huſband to command;
All muſt be her's, both money, houſe, and land.
The maids are miſtreſſes ev'n in their name;
And of their ſervants full dominion claim.
This, at the peril of my head, I ſay,
A blunt plain truth, the ſex aſpires to ſway,
You to rule all, while we, like ſlaves, obey.
There was not one, or widow, maid, or wife,
But ſaid the knight had well deſerv'd his life.
Ev'n fair Geneura, with a bluſh, confeſs'd
The man had found what women love the beſt.

Upſtarts the beldam, who was there unſeen:
And, reverence made, accoſted thus the queen.
My liege, ſaid ſhe, before the court ariſe,
May I, poor wretch, find favour in your eyes,
To grant my juſt requeſt: 'twas I who taught
The knight this anſwer, and inſpir'd his thought.
None but a woman could a man direct
To tell us women, what we moſt affect.
But firſt I ſwore him on his knightly troth,
(And here demand performance of his oath)
To grant the boon that next I ſhould deſire;
He gave his faith, and I expect my hire:
My promiſe is fulfill'd: I ſav'd his life,
And claim his debt, to take me for his wife.
The knight was aſk'd, nor could his oath deny,
But hop'd they would not force him to comply.
The women, who would rather wreſt the laws,
Than let a ſiſter-plaintiff loſe the cauſe,
(As judges on the bench more gracious are,
And more attent, to brothers of the bar)
Cry'd one and all, the ſuppliant ſhould have right,
And to the grandame hag adjudg'd the knight.
In vain he ſigh'd, and oft with tears deſir'd,
Some reaſonable ſuit might be requir'd.
But ſtill the crone was conſtant to her note:
The more he ſpoke, the more ſhe ſtretch'd her throat.
In vain he proffer'd all his goods, to ſave
His body deſtin'd to that living grave.
The liquoriſh hag rejects the pelf with ſcorn;
And nothing but the man would ſerve her turn.

Not

Not all the wealth of Eaſtern kings, ſaid ſhe,
Have power to part my plighted love and me:
And, old and ugly as I am, and poor,
Yet never will I break the faith I ſwore;
For mine thou art by promiſe, during life,
And I thy loving and obedient wife.
My love! nay rather my damnation thou,
Said he: nor am I bound to keep my vow;
The fiend thy ſire hath ſent thee from below,
Elſe how could'ſt thou my ſecret ſorrows know?
Avant, old witch, for I renounce thy bed:
The queen may take the forfeit of my head,
Ere any of my race ſo foul a crone ſhall wed.
Both heard, the judge pronounc'd againſt the knight;
So was he marry'd in his own deſpite:
And all day after hid him as an owl,
Not able to ſuſtain a ſight ſo foul.
Perhaps the reader thinks I do him wrong,
To paſs the marriage feaſt and nuptial ſong:
Mirth there was none, the man was *à-la-mort*,
And little courage had to make his court.
To bed they went, the bridegroom and the bride;
Was never ſuch an ill-pair'd couple ty'd:
Reſtleſs he toſs'd, and tumbled to and fro,
And roll'd and wriggled further off for woe.
The good old wife lay ſmiling by his ſide,
And caught him in her quivering arms, and cry'd,
When you my raviſh'd predeceſſor ſaw,
You were not then become this man of ſtraw;
Had you been ſuch, you might have ſcap'd the law.

Is this the cuſtom of king Arthur's court?
Are all round-table knights of ſuch a ſort?
Remember I am ſhe who ſav'd your life,
Your loving, lawful, and complying wife:
Not thus you ſwore in your unhappy hour,
Nor I for this return employ'd my power.
In time of need, I was your faithful friend;
Nor did I ſince, nor ever will, offend.
Believe me, my lov'd lord, 'tis much unkind;
What fury has poſſeſs'd your alter'd mind?
Thus on my wedding night-without pretence—
Come turn this way, or tell me my offence.
If not your wife, let reaſon's rule perſuade;
Name but my fault, amends ſhall ſoon be made.
Amends! nay that 's impoſſible, ſaid he;
What change of age or uglineſs can be?
Or, could Medea's magic mend thy face,
Thou art deſcended from ſo mean a race,
That never knight was match'd with ſuch diſgrace.
What wonder, madam, if I move my ſide,
When, if I turn, I turn to ſuch a bride?
And is this all that troubles you ſo ſore?
And what the devil could'ſt thou wiſh me more?
Ah, Benedicite, reply'd the crone:
Then cauſe of juſt complaining have you none.
The remedy to this were ſoon apply'd,
Would you be like the bridegroom to the bride:
But, for you ſay a long deſcended race,
And wealth, and dignity, and power, and place,

Make

Make gentlemen, and that your high degree
Is much diſparag'd to be match'd with me;
Know this, my lord, nobility of blood
Is but a glittering and fallacious good:
The nobleman is he whoſe noble mind
Is fill'd with inborn worth, unborrow'd from his kind.
The king of heaven was in a manger laid;
And took his earth but from an humble maid;
Then what can birth, or mortal men, beſtow?
Since floods no higher than their fountains flow.
We, who for name and empty honour ſtrive,
Our true nobility from him derive.
Your anceſtors, who puff your mind with pride,
And vaſt eſtates to mighty titles ty'd,
Did not your honour, but their own, advance;
For virtue comes not by inheritance.
If you tralineate from your father's mind,
What are you elſe but of a baſtard-kind?
Do, as your great progenitors have done,
And by their virtues prove yourſelf their ſon.
No father can infuſe or wit or grace;
A mother comes acroſs, and mars the race.
A grandſire or a grandame taints the blood;
And ſeldom three deſcents continue good.
Were virtue by deſcent, a noble name
Could never villanize his father's fame:
But, as the firſt, the laſt of all the line
Would like the ſun even in deſcending ſhine;
Take fire, and bear it to the darkeſt houſe,
Betwixt king Arthur's court and Caucaſus;

If

If you depart, the flame ſhall ſtill remain,
And the bright blaze enlighten all the plain:
Nor, till the fuel periſh, can decay,
By nature form'd on things combuſtible to prey.
Such is not man, who, mixing better feed
With worſe, begets a baſe degenerate breed:
The bad corrupts the good, and leaves behind
No trace of all the great begetter's mind.
The father ſinks within his ſon, we ſee,
And often riſes in the third degree;
If better luck a better mother give,
Chance gave us being, and by chance we live.
Such as our atoms were, even ſuch are we,
Or call it chance, or ſtrong neceſſity:
Thus loaded with dead weight, the will is free.
And thus it needs muſt be: for ſeed conjoin'd
Lets into nature's work th' imperfect kind;
But fire, th' enlivener of the general frame,
Is one, its operation ſtill the ſame.
Its principle is in itſelf: while ours
Works, as confederates war, with mingled powers;
Or man or woman, whichſoever fails:
And, oft, the vigour of the worſe prevails.
Æther with ſulphur blended alters hue,
And caſts a duſky gleam of Sodom blue.
Thus, in a brute, their ancient honour ends,
And the fair mermaid in a fiſh deſcends:
The line is gone; no longer duke or earl;
But, by himſelf degraded, turns a churl.

Nobility

Nobility of blood is but renown
Of thy great fathers by their virtue known,
And a long trail of light, to thee deſcending down.
If in thy ſmoke it ends, their glories ſhine;
But infamy and villanage are thine.
Then what I ſaid before is plainly ſhow'd,
The true nobility proceeds from God:
Nor left us by inheritance, but given
By bounty of our ſtars, and grace of heaven.
Thus from a captive Servius Tullius roſe,
Whom for his virtues the firſt Romans choſe:
Fabricius from their walls repell'd the foe,
Whoſe noble hands had exercis'd the plough.
From hence, my lord and love, I thus conclude,
That though my homely anceſtors were rude,
Mean as I am, yet I may have the grace
To make you father of a generous race:
And noble then am I, when I begin,
In virtue cloath'd, to caſt the rags of ſin.
If poverty be my upbraided crime,
And you believe in Heaven, there was a time
When He, the great controller of our fate,
Deign'd to be man, and liv'd in low eſtate:
Which he who had the world at his diſpoſe,
If poverty were vice, would never chooſe.
Philoſophers have ſaid, and poets ſing,
That a glad poverty 's an honeſt thing.
Content is wealth, the riches of the mind;
And happy he who can that treaſure find.

But the baſe miſer ſtarves amidſt his ſtore,
Broods on his gold, and, griping ſtill at more,
Sits ſadly pining, and believes he 's poor.
The ragged beggar, though he want relief,
Has not to loſe, and ſings before the thief.
Want is a bitter and a hateful good,
Becauſe its virtues are not underſtood:
Yet many things, impoſſible to thought,
Have been by need to full perfection brought;
The daring of the ſoul proceeds from thence,
Sharpneſs of wit, and active diligence;
Prudence at once, and fortitude, it gives,
And, if in patience taken, mends our lives;
For ev'n that indigence, that brings me low,
Makes me myſelf, and Him above, to know.
A good which none would challenge, few would chooſe,
A fair poſſeſſion, which mankind refuſe.
If we from wealth to poverty deſcend,
Want gives to know the flatterer from the friend.
If I am old and ugly, well for you,
No lewd adulterer will my love purſue;
Nor jealouſy, the bane of marry'd life,
Shall haunt you for a wither'd homely wife;
For age and uglineſs, as all agree,
Are the beſt guards of female chaſtity.
Yet ſince I ſee your mind is worldly bent,
I 'll do my beſt to further your content.
And therefore of two gifts in my diſpoſe,
Think ere you ſpeak, I grant you leave to chooſe;

Would

Would you I ſhould be ſtill deform'd and old,
Nauſeous to touch, and loathſome to behold;
On this condition to remain for life
A careful, tender, and obedient wife,
In all I can contribute to your eaſe,
And not in deed, or word, or thought, diſpleaſe?
Or would you rather have me young and fair,
And take the chance that happens to your ſhare?
Temptations are in beauty, and in youth,
And how can you depend upon my truth?
Now weigh the danger with the doubtful bliſs,
And thank yourſelf if aught ſhould fall amiſs.

Sore ſigh'd the knight, who this long ſermon heard;
At length, conſidering all, his heart he chear'd;
And thus reply'd: My lady and my wife,
To your wiſe conduct I reſign my life:
Chooſe you for me, for well you underſtand
The future good and ill, on either hand:
But if an humble huſband may requeſt,
Provide, and order all things for the beſt;
Your's be the care to profit, and to pleaſe:
And let your ſubject ſervant take his eaſe.

Then thus in peace, quoth ſhe, concludes the ſtrife;
Since I am turn'd the huſband, you the wife:
The matrimonial victory is mine,
Which, having fairly gain'd, I will reſign;
Forgive if I have ſaid or done amiſs,
And ſeal the bargain with a friendly kiſs:
I promis'd you but one content to ſhare,
But now I will become both good and fair,

No nuptial quarrel ſhall diſturb your eaſe;
The buſineſs of my life ſhall be to pleaſe:
And for my beauty, that, as time ſhall try;
But draw the curtain firſt, and caſt your eye.
He look'd, and ſaw a creature heavenly fair,
In bloom of youth, and of a charming air.
With joy he turn'd, and ſeiz'd her ivory arm;
And like Pygmalion found the ſtatue warm.
Small arguments there needed to prevail,
A ſtorm of kiſſes pour'd as thick as hail.
Thus long in mutual bliſs they lay embrac'd,
And their firſt love continued to the laſt:
One ſunſhine was their life, no cloud between;
Nor ever was a kinder couple ſeen.

And ſo may all our lives like theirs be led;
Heaven ſend the maids young huſbands freſh in bed;
May widows wed as often as they can,
And ever for the better change their man;
And ſome devouring plague purſue their lives,
Who will not well be govern'd by their wives.

THE

THE

CHARACTER

OF A

GOOD PARSON.

A Pariſh prieſt was of the pilgrim-train;
An awful, reverend, and religious man.
His eyes diffus'd a venerable grace,
And charity itſelf was in his face.
Rich was his ſoul, though his attire was poor
(As God had cloth'd his own ambaſſador);
For ſuch, on earth, his bleſs'd redeemer bore.
Of ſixty years he ſeem'd; and well might laſt
To ſixty more, but that he liv'd too faſt;
Refin'd himſelf to ſoul, to curb the ſenſe;
And made almoſt a ſin of abſtinence.
Yet, had his aſpect nothing of ſevere,
But ſuch a face as promis'd him ſincere.
Nothing reſerv'd or ſullen was to ſee:
But ſweet regards, and pleaſing ſanctity:
Mild was his accent, and his action free.
With eloquence innate his tongue was arm'd;
Though harſh the precept, yet the people charm'd.
For, letting down the golden chain from high,
He drew his audience upward to the ſky:
And oft with holy hymns he charm'd their ears
(A muſic more melodious than the ſpheres):

For

For David left him, when he went to reſt,
His lyre; and after him he ſung the beſt.
He bore his great commiſſion in his look:
But ſweetly temper'd awe; and ſoften'd all he ſpoke.
He preach'd the joys of heaven, and pains of hell,
And warn'd the ſinner with becoming zeal;
But on eternal mercy lov'd to dwell.
He taught the goſpel rather than the law;
And forc'd himſelf to drive; but lov'd to draw.
For fear but freezes minds: but love, like heat,
Exhales the ſoul ſublime, to ſeek her native ſeat.
To threats the ſtubborn ſinner oft is hard,
Wrapp'd in his crimes, againſt the ſtorm prepar'd;
But, when the milder beams of mercy play,
He melts, and throws his cumbrous cloak away.
Lightning and thunder (heaven's artillery)
As harbingers before th' Almighty fly:
Thoſe but proclaim his ſtile, and diſappear;
The ſtiller ſound ſucceeds, and God is there.

The tithes, his pariſh freely paid, he took;
But never ſued, or curs'd with bell and book.
With patience bearing wrong; but offering none:
Since every man is free to loſe his own.
The country churls, according to their kind,
(Who grudge their dues, and love to be behind);
The leſs he ſought his offerings, pinch'd the more,
And prais'd a prieſt contented to be poor.

Yet of his little he had ſome to ſpare,
To feed the famiſh'd, and to clothe the bare:

For

For mortify'd he was to that degree,
A poorer than himſelf he would not ſee.
True prieſts, he ſaid, and preachers of the word,
Were only ſtewards of their ſovereign lord;
Nothing was their's; but all the public ſtore:
Intruſted riches, to relieve the poor.
Who, ſhould they ſteal, for want of his relief,
He judg'd himſelf accomplice with the thief.
Wide was his pariſh; not contracted cloſe
In ſtreets, but here and there a ſtraggling houſe;
Yet ſtill he was at hand, without requeſt,
To ſerve the ſick; to ſuccour the diſtreſs'd:
Tempting, on foot, alone, without affright,
The dangers of a dark tempeſtuous night.
All this, the good old man perform'd alone,
Nor ſpar'd his pains; for curate he had none.
Nor durſt he truſt another with his care;
Nor rode himſelf to Paul's, the public fair,
To chaffer for preferment with his gold,
Where biſhoprics and ſinecures are ſold.
But duly watch'd his flock, by night and day;
And from the prowling wolf redeem'd the prey:
And hungry ſent the wily fox away.
The proud he tam'd, the penitent he chear'd:
Nor to rebuke the rich offender fear'd.
His preaching much, but more his practice wrought
(A living ſermon of the truths he taught);
For this by rules ſevere his life he ſquar'd:
That all might ſee the doctrine which they heard.

For prieſts, he ſaid, are patterns for the reſt
(The gold of heaven, who bear the God impreſs'd):
But when the precious coin is kept unclean,
The ſovereign's image is no longer ſeen.
If they be foul on whom the people truſt,
Well may the baſer braſs contract a ruſt.
The prelate, for his holy life he priz'd;
The worldly pomp of prelacy deſpis'd.
His Saviour came not with a gaudy ſhow;
Nor was his kingdom of the world below.
Patience in want, and poverty of mind,
Theſe marks of church and churchmen he deſign'd,
And living taught, and dying left behind.
The crown he wore was of the pointed thorn:
In purple he was crucify'd, not born.
They who contend for place and high degree,
Are not his ſons, but thoſe of Zebedee.
Not but he knew the ſigns of earthly power
Might well become Saint Peter's ſucceſſor;
The holy father holds a double reign,
The prince may keep his pomp, the fiſher muſt be plain.
Such was the ſaint; who ſhone with every grace,
Reflecting, Moſes like, his Maker's face.
God ſaw his image lively was expreſs'd;
And his own work, as in creation bleſs'd.
The tempter ſaw him too with envious eye;
And, as on Job, demanded leave to try.
He took the time when Richard was depos'd,
And high and low with happy Harry clos'd.

This prince, though great in arms, the prieſt withſtood:
Near though he was, yet not the next of blood.
Had Richard unconſtrain'd, reſign'd the throne,
A king can give no more than is his own:
The title ſtood entail'd, had Richard had a ſon.

Conqueſt, an odious name, was laid aſide,
Where all ſubmitted, none the battle try'd.
The ſenſeleſs plea of right by providence
Was, by a flattering prieſt, invented ſince;
And laſts no longer than the preſent ſway;
But juſtifies the next who comes in play.

The people's right remains; let thoſe who dare
Diſpute their power, when they the judges are.

He join'd not in their choice, becauſe he knew
Worſe might, and often did, from change enſue.
Much to himſelf he thought; but little ſpoke;
And, undepriv'd, his benefice forſook.

Now, through the land, his cure of ſouls he ſtretch'd:
And like a primitive apoſtle preach'd.
Still chearful; ever conſtant to his call;
By many follow'd; lov'd by moſt, admir'd by all.
With what he begg'd, his brethren he reliev'd;
And gave the charities himſelf receiv'd.
Gave, while he taught; and edify'd the more,
Becauſe he ſhew'd, by proof, 'twas eaſy to be poor.

He went not with the crowd to ſee a ſhrine;
But fed us, by the way, with food divine.

In deference to his virtues, I forbear
To ſhew you what the reſt in orders were:
This brilliant is ſo ſpotleſs, and ſo bright,
He needs no foil, but ſhines by his own proper light.

TRANS-

TRANSLATIONS

FROM

BOCCACE.

SIGISMONDA AND GUISCARDO.

WHILE Norman Tancred in Salerno reign'd,
The title of a gracious prince he gain'd;
Till, turn'd a tyrant in his latter days,
He loſt the luſtre of his former praiſe;
And from the bright meridian where he ſtood,
Deſcending, dipp'd his hands in lovers blood.
This prince, of Fortune's favour long poſſeſs'd,
Yet was with one fair daughter only bleſs'd;
And bleſs'd he might have been with her alone:
But oh! how much more happy had he none!
She was his care, his hope, and his delight,
Moſt in his thought, and ever in his ſight:
Next, nay beyond his life, he held her dear;
She liv'd by him, and now he liv'd in her.
For this, when ripe for marriage, he delay'd
Her nuptial bands, and kept her long a maid,
As envying any elſe ſhould ſhare a part
Of what was his, and claiming all her heart.
At length, as public decency requir'd,
And all his vaſſals eagerly deſir'd,
With mind averſe, he rather underwent
His people's will, than gave his own conſent.

So was ſhe torn, as from a lover's ſide,
And made almoſt in his deſpite a bride.
Short were her marriage joys; for in the prime
Of youth, her lord expir'd before his time;
And to her father's court in little ſpace
Reſtor'd anew, ſhe held a higher place;
More lov'd, and more exalted into grace.
This princeſs freſh and young, and fair and wiſe,
The worſhip'd idol of her father's eyes,
Did all her ſex in every grace exceed,
And had more wit beſide than women need.
Youth, health, and eaſe, and moſt an amorous mind,
To ſecond nuptials had her thoughts inclin'd:
And former joys had left a ſecret ſting behind.
But, prodigal in every other grant,
Her ſire left unſupply'd her only want;
And ſhe, betwixt her modeſty and pride,
Her wiſhes, which ſhe could not help, would hide.
Reſolv'd at laſt to loſe no longer time,
And yet to pleaſe herſelf without a crime,
She caſt her eyes around the court, to find
A worthy ſubject ſuiting to her mind,
To him in holy nuptials to be ty'd,
A ſeeming widow, and a ſecret bride.
Among the train of courtiers, one ſhe found
With all the gifts of bounteous nature crown'd,
Of gentle blood; but one whoſe niggard fate
Had ſet him far below her high eſtate;
Guiſcard his name was call'd, of blooming age,
Now ſquire to Tancred, and before his page:

To

To him, the choice of all the ſhining crowd,
Her heart the noble Sigiſmonda vow'd.
Yet hitherto ſhe kept her love conceal'd,
And with thoſe graces every day beheld
The graceful youth; and every day increas'd
The raging fires that burn'd within her breaſt;
Some ſecret charm did all her acts attend,
And what his fortune wanted, hers could mend;
Till, as the fire will force its outward way,
Or, in the priſon pent, conſume the prey;
So long her earneſt eyes on his were ſet,
At length their twiſted rays together met;
And he, ſurpriz'd with humble joy, ſurvey'd
One ſweet regard, ſhot by the royal maid:
Not well aſſur'd, while doubtful hopes he nurs'd,
A ſecond glance came gliding like the firſt;
And he, who ſaw the ſharpneſs of the dart,
Without defence receiv'd it in his heart.
In public, though their paſſion wanted ſpeech,
Yet mutual looks interpreted for each;
Time, ways, and means of meeting were deny'd;
But all thoſe wants ingenious love ſupply'd.
Th' inventive God, who never fails his part,
Inſpires the wit, when once he warms the heart.
When Guiſcard next was in the circle ſeen,
Where Sigiſmonda held the place of queen,
A hollow cane within her hand ſhe brought,
But in the concave had enclos'd a note;
With this ſhe ſeem'd to play, and, as in ſport,
Toſs'd to her love, in preſence of the court;

Take

Take it, ſhe ſaid; and when your needs require,
This little brand will ſerve to light your fire.
He took it with a bow, and ſoon divin'd
The ſeeming toy was not for nought deſign'd:
But when retir'd, ſo long with curious eyes
He view'd his preſent, that he found the prize.
Much was in little writ; and all convey'd
With cautious care, for fear to be betray'd,
By ſome falſe confident, or favourite maid.
The time, the place, the manner how to meet,
Were all in punctual order plainly writ:
But, ſince a truſt muſt be, ſhe thought it beſt
To put it out of laymen's power at leaſt;
And for their ſolemn vows prepar'd a prieſt.
  Guiſcard (her ſecret purpoſe underſtood)
With joy prepar'd to meet the coming good;
Nor pains nor danger was reſolv'd to ſpare,
But uſe the means appointed by the fair.
  Next the proud palace of Salerno ſtood
A mount of rough aſcent, and thick with wood.
Through this a cave was dug with vaſt expence:
The work it ſeem'd of ſome ſuſpicious prince,
Who, when abuſing power with lawleſs might,
From public juſtice would ſecure his flight.
The paſſage made by many a winding way,
Reach'd ev'n the room in which the tyrant lay.
Fit for his purpoſe, on a lower floor,
He lodg'd, whoſe iſſue was an iron door;
From whence, by ſtairs deſcending to the ground,
In the blind grot a ſafe retreat he found.

Its

Its outlet ended in a brake o'ergrown
With brambles, choak'd by time, and now unknown.
A rift there was, which from the mountain's height
Convey'd a glimmering and malignant light,
A breathing-place to draw the damps away,
A twilight of an intercepted day.
The tyrant's den, whoſe uſe, though loſt to fame,
Was now th' apartment of the royal dame;
The cavern only to her father known,
By him was to his darling daughter ſhown.
Neglected long ſhe let the ſecret reſt,
Till love recall'd it to her labouring breaſt,
And hinted as the way by heaven deſign'd
The teacher, by the means he taught, to blind.
What will not women do, when need inſpires
Their wit, or love their inclination fires!
Though jealouſy of ſtate th' invention found,
Yet love refin'd upon the former ground.
That way, the tyrant had reſerv'd, to fly
Purſuing hate, now ſerv'd to bring two lovers nigh.
The dame, who long in vain had kept the key,
Bold by deſire, explor'd the ſecret way;
Now try'd the ſtairs, and, wading through the night,
Search'd all the deep receſs, and iſſued into light.
All this her letter had ſo well explain'd,
Th' inſtructed youth might compaſs what remain'd;
The cavern's mouth alone was hard to find,
Becauſe the path, diſus'd, was out of mind:
But in what quarter of the copſe it lay,
His eye by certain level could ſurvey:

Yet

Yet (for the wood perplex'd with thorns he knew)
A frock of leather o'er his limbs he drew;
And, thus provided, ſearch'd the brake around,
Till the choak'd entry of the cave he found.
Thus, all prepar'd, the promis'd hour arriv'd
So long expected, and ſo well contriv'd:
With love to friend, th' impatient lover went,
Fenc'd from the thorns, and trod the deep deſcent.
The conſcious prieſt, who was ſuborn'd before,
Stood ready poſted at the poſtern door;
The maids in diſtant rooms were ſent to reſt,
And nothing wanted but th' invited gueſt.
He came, and knocking thrice without delay,
The longing lady heard, and turn'd the key;
At once invaded him with all her charms,
And the firſt ſtep he made was in her arms:
The leathern outſide, boiſterous as it was,
Gave way, and bent beneath her ſtrict embrace:
On either ſide the kiſſes flew ſo thick,
That neither he nor ſhe had breath to ſpeak.
The holy man, amaz'd at what he ſaw,
Made haſte to ſanctify the bliſs by law;
And mutter'd faſt the matrimony o'er,
For fear committed ſin ſhould get before.
His work perform'd, he left the pair alone,
Becauſe he knew he could not go too ſoon;
His preſence odious, when his taſk was done.
What thoughts he had beſeems me not to ſay;
Though ſome ſurmiſe he went to faſt and pray,
And needed both to drive the tempting thoughts away.

The

The foe once gone, they took their full delight:
'Twas reſtleſs rage, and tempeſt all the night;
For greedy love each moment would employ,
And grudg'd the ſhorteſt pauſes of their joy.
Thus were their loves auſpiciouſly begun,
And thus with ſecret care were carried on.
The ſtealth itſelf did appetite reſtore,
And look'd ſo like a ſin, it pleas'd the more.
The cave was now become a common way,
The wicket, often open'd, knew the key:
Love rioted ſecure, and, long enjoy'd,
Was ever eager, and was never cloy'd.
But as extremes are ſhort, of ill and good,
And tides at higheſt mark regorge their flood;
So fate, that could no more improve their joy,
Took a malicious pleaſure to deſtroy.
Tancred, who fondly lov'd, and whoſe delight
Was plac'd in his fair daughter's daily ſight,
Of cuſtom, when his ſtate affairs were done,
Would paſs his pleaſing hours with her alone;
And, as a father's privilege allow'd,
Without attendance of th' officious crowd.
It happen'd once, that when in heat of day
He try'd to ſleep, as was his uſual way,
The balmy ſlumber fled his wakeful eyes,
And forc'd him, in his own deſpite, to riſe:
Of ſleep forſaken, to relieve his care,
He ſought the converſation of the fair;
But with her train of damſels ſhe was gone,
In ſhady walks the ſcorching heat to ſhun:

He would not violate that ſweet receſs,
And found beſides a welcome heavineſs,
That ſeiz'd his eyes; and ſlumber, which forgot
When call'd before to come, now came unſought.
From light retir'd, behind his daughter's bed,
He for approaching ſleep compos'd his head;
A chair was ready, for that uſe deſign'd,
So quilted, that he lay at eaſe reclin'd;
The curtains cloſely drawn, the light to ſkreen,
As if he had contriv'd to lie unſeen:
Thus cover'd with an artificial night,
Sleep did his office ſoon, and ſeal'd his ſight.
With heaven averſe in this ill-omen'd hour
Was Guiſcard ſummon'd to the ſecret bower,
And the fair nymph, with expectation fir'd,
From her attending damſels was retir'd:
For, true to love, ſhe meaſur'd time ſo right,
As not to miſs one moment of delight.
The garden, ſeated on the level floor,
She left behind, and, locking every door,
Thought all ſecure; but little did ſhe know,
Blind to her fate, ſhe had enclos'd her foe.
Attending Guiſcard, in his leathern frock,
Stood ready, with his thrice-repeated knock:
Thrice with a doleful ſound the jarring grate
Rung deaf and hollow, and preſag'd their fate.
The door unlock'd, to known delight they haſte,
And, panting in each other's arms embrac'd,
Ruſh to the conſcious bed, a mutual freight,
And heedleſs preſs it with their wonted weight.

The

The ſudden bound awak'd the ſleeping ſire,
And ſhew'd a ſight no parent can deſire;
His opening eyes at once with odious view
The love diſcover'd, and the lover knew:
He would have cry'd; but hoping that he dreamt,
Amazement ty'd his tongue, and ſtopp'd th' attempt.
Th' enſuing moment all the truth declar'd,
But now he ſtood collected, and prepar'd,
For malice and revenge had put him on his guard.
So like a lion, that unheeded lay,
Diſſembling ſleep, and watchful to betray,
With inward rage he meditates his prey.
The thoughtleſs pair, indulging their deſires;
Alternate, kindled, and then quench'd their fires;
Nor thinking in the ſhades of death they play'd,
Full of themſelves, themſelves alone ſurvey'd,
And, too ſecure, were by themſelves betray'd.
Long time diſſolv'd in pleaſure thus they lay,
Till nature could no more ſuffice their play;
Then roſe the youth, and through the cave again
Return'd; the princeſs mingled with her train.
Reſolv'd his unripe vengeance to defer,
The royal ſpy, when now the coaſt was clear,
Sought not the garden, but retir'd unſeen,
To brood in ſecret on his gather'd ſpleen,
And methodize revenge: to death he griev'd;
And, but he ſaw the crime, had ſcarce believ'd.
Th' appointment for th' enſuing night he heard;
And therefore in the cavern had prepar'd
Two brawny yeomen of his truſty guard.

Scarce

Scarce had unwary Guiſcard ſet his foot
Within the foremoſt entrance of the grot,
When theſe in ſecret ambuſh ready lay;
And ruſhing on the ſudden ſeiz'd the prey:
Encumber'd with his frock, without defence,
An eaſy prize, they led the priſoner thence,
And, as commanded, brought before the prince.
The gloomy ſire, too ſenſible of wrong,
To vent his rage in words, reſtrain'd his tongue,
And only ſaid, Thus ſervants are preferr'd,
And, truſted, thus their ſovereigns they reward.
Had I not ſeen, had not theſe eyes receiv'd
Too clear a proof, I could not have believ'd.
He paus'd, and choak'd the reſt. The youth, who ſaw
His forfeit life abandon'd to the law,
The judge th' accuſer, and th' offence to him
Who had both power and will t' avenge the crime,
No vain defence prepar'd; but thus reply'd:
The faults of love by love are juſtify'd:
With unreſiſted might the monarch reigns,
He levels mountains, and he raiſes plains;
And, not regarding difference of degree,
Abas'd your daughter, and exalted me.
This bold return with ſeeming patience heard,
The priſoner was remitted to the guard.
The ſullen tyrant ſlept not all the night,
But, lonely walking by a winking light,
Sobb'd, wept, and groan'd, and beat his wither'd breaſt,
But would not violate his daughter's reſt;

Who

Who long expecting lay, for bliſs prepar'd,
Liſtening for noiſe, and griev'd that none ſhe heard;
Oft roſe, and oft in vain employ'd the key,
And oft accus'd her lover of delay;
And paſs'd the tedious hours in anxious thoughts away.
The morrow came; and at his uſual hour
Old Tancred viſited his daughter's bower;
Her cheek (for ſuch his cuſtom was) he kiſs'd,
Then bleſs'd her kneeling, and her maids diſmiſs'd.
The royal dignity thus far maintain'd,
Now left in private, he no longer feign'd;
But all at once his grief and rage appear'd,
And floods of tears ran trickling down his beard.
O Sigiſmonda, he began to ſay:
Thrice he began, and thrice was forc'd to ſtay,
Till words with often trying found their way:
I thought, O Sigiſmonda, (but how blind
Are parents' eyes, their children's faults to find!)
Thy virtue, birth, and breeding, were above
A mean deſire, and vulgar ſenſe of love:
Nor leſs than ſight and hearing could convince
So fond a father, and ſo juſt a prince,
Of ſuch an unforeſeen and unbeliev'd offence.
Then what indignant ſorrow muſt I have,
To ſee thee lye ſubjected to my ſlave!
A man ſo ſmelling of the people's lee,
The court receiv'd him firſt for charity;
And ſince with no degree of honour grac'd,
But only ſuffer'd, where he firſt was plac'd.

A groveling inſect ſtill; and ſo deſign'd
By nature's hand, nor born of noble kind:
A thing, by neither man nor woman priz'd,
And ſcarcely known enough to be deſpis'd.
To what has heaven reſerv'd my age? Ah! why
Should man, when nature calls, not chuſe to die,
Rather than ſtretch the ſpan of life, to find
Such ills as fate has wiſely caſt behind,
For thoſe to feel, whom fond deſire to live
Makes covetous of more than life can give!
Each has his ſhare of good; and when 'tis gone,
The gueſt, though hungry, cannot riſe too ſoon.
But I, expecting more, in my own wrong
Protracting life, have liv'd a day too long.
If yeſterday could be recall'd again,
Ev'n now would I conclude my happy reign;
But 'tis too late, my glorious race is run,
And a dark cloud o'ertakes my ſetting ſun.
Had'ſt thou not lov'd, or loving ſav'd the ſhame,
If not the ſin, by ſome illuſtrious name,
This little comfort had reliev'd my mind,
'Twas frailty, not unuſual to thy kind:
But thy low fall beneath thy royal blood
Shews downward appetite to mix with mud:
Thus not the leaſt excuſe is left for thee,
Nor the leaſt refuge for unhappy me.

For him I have reſolv'd: whom by ſurprize
I took, and ſcarce can call it, in diſguiſe;
For ſuch was his attire, as, with intent
Of nature, ſuited to his mean deſcent:

The

The harder queſtion yet remains behind,
What pains a parent and a prince can find
To puniſh an offence of this degenerate kind.
  As I have lov'd, and yet I love thee more
Than ever father lov'd a child before;
So that indulgence draws me to forgive:
Nature, that gave thee life, would have thee live:
But, as a public parent of the ſtate,
My juſtice, and thy crime, requires thy fate.
Fain would I chuſe a middle courſe to ſteer;
Nature 's too kind, and juſtice too ſevere:
Speak for us both, and to the balance bring
On either ſide the father and the king.
Heaven knows, my heart is bent to favour thee;
Make it but ſcanty weight, and leave the reſt to me.
  Here ſtopping with a ſigh, he pour'd a flood
Of tears, to make his laſt expreſſion good.
She, who had heard him ſpeak, nor ſaw alone
The ſecret conduct of her love was known,
But he was taken who her ſoul poſſeſs'd,
Felt all the pangs of ſorrow in her breaſt:
And little wanted, but a woman's heart,
With cries and tears had teſtified her ſmart,
But inborn worth, that fortune can control,
New ſtrung and ſtiffer bent her ſofter ſoul;
The heroine aſſum'd the woman's place,
Confirm'd her mind, and fortify'd her face:
Why ſhould ſhe beg, or what could ſhe pretend,
When her ſtern father had condemn'd her friend?

Her life ſhe might have had; but her deſpair
Of ſaving his, had put it paſt her care;
Reſolv'd on fate ſhe, would not loſe her breath,
But, rather than not die, ſolicit death.
Fix'd on this thought, ſhe, not as women uſe,
Her fault by common frailty would excuſe;
But boldly juſtify'd her innocence,
And while the fact was own'd, deny'd th' offence:
Then with dry eyes, and with an open look,
She met his glance mid-way, and thus undaunted ſpoke,
Tancred, I neither am diſpos'd to make
Requeſt for life, nor offer'd life to take;
Much leſs deny the deed; but leaſt of all
Beneath pretended juſtice weakly fall.
My words to ſacred truth ſhall be confin'd,
My deeds ſhall ſhew the greatneſs of my mind.
That I have lov'd, I own; that ſtill I love,
I call to witneſs all the powers above:
Yet more I own: to Guiſcard's love I give
The ſmall remaining time I have to live;
And if beyond this life deſire can be,
Not fate itſelf ſhall ſet my paſſion free.
This firſt avow'd; nor folly warp'd my mind,
Nor the frail texture of the female kind
Betray'd my virtue: for, too well I knew
What honour was, and honour had his due:
Before the holy prieſt my vows were ty'd,
So came I not a ſtrumpet, but a bride.

This for my fame, and for the public voice:
Yet more, his merits juſtify'd my choice:
Which had they not, the firſt election thine,
That bond diſſolv'd, the next is freely mine;
Or grant I err'd, (which yet I muſt deny)
Had parents power ev'n ſecond vows to tie,
Thy little care to mend my widow'd nights,
Has forc'd me to recourſe of marriage rites,
To fill an empty ſide, and follow known delights.
What have I done in this, deſerving blame?
State-laws may alter: nature's are the ſame;
Thoſe are uſurp'd on helpleſs woman-kind,
Made without our conſent, and wanting power to bind.
Thou, Tancred, better ſhouldſt have underſtood,
That as thy father gave thee fleſh and blood,
So gav'ſt thou me: not from the quarry hew'd,
But of a ſofter mould, with ſenſe endued;
Ev'n ſofter than thy own, of ſuppler kind,
More exquiſite of taſte, and more than man refin'd.
Nor need'ſt thou by thy daughter to be told,
Though now thy ſprightly blood with age be cold,
Thou haſt been young: and canſt remember ſtill,
That when thou hadſt the power, thou hadſt the will;
And from the paſt experience of thy fires,
Canſt tell with what a tide our ſtrong deſires
Come ruſhing on in youth, and what their rage requires.
And grant thy youth was exercis'd in arms,
When love no leiſure found for ſofter charms,

My tender age in luxury was train'd,
With idle eaſe and pageants entertain'd;
My hours my own, my pleaſures unreſtrain'd.
So bred, no wonder if I took the bent
That ſeem'd ev'n warranted by thy conſent;
For, when the father is too fondly kind,
Such ſeed he ſows, ſuch harveſt ſhall he find.
Blame then thyſelf, as reaſon's law requires,
(Since nature gave, and thou foment'ſt, my fires);
If ſtill thoſe appetites continue ſtrong,
Thou may'ſt conſider I am yet but young:
Conſider too that, having been a wife,
I muſt have taſted of a better life;
And am not to be blam'd, if I renew
By lawful means the joys which then I knew.
Where was the crime, if pleaſure I procur'd,
Young, and a woman, and to bliſs inur'd!
That was my caſe, and this is my defence:
I pleas'd myſelf, I ſhunn'd incontinence,
And, urg'd by ſtrong deſires, indulg'd my ſenſe.
Left to myſelf, I muſt avow, I ſtrove
From public ſhame, to ſcreen my ſecret love,
And, well acquainted with thy native pride,
Endeavour'd what I could not help, to hide;
For which a woman's wit an eaſy way ſupply'd.
How this, ſo well contriv'd, ſo cloſely laid,
Was known to thee, or by what chance betray'd,
Is not my care; to pleaſe thy pride alone,
I could have wiſh'd it had been ſtill unknown.

Nor

Nor took I Guiſcard by blind fancy led,
Or haſty choice, as many women wed;
But with deliberate care, and ripen'd thought,
At leiſure firſt deſign'd, before I wrought:
On him I reſted, after long debate,
And, not without conſidering, fix'd my fate:
His flame was equal, though by mine inſpir'd
(For ſo the difference of our birth requir'd);
Had he been born like me, like me his love
Had firſt begun, what mine was forc'd to move:
But thus beginning, thus we perſevere;
Our paſſions yet continue what they were,
Nor length of trial makes our joys the leſs ſincere.
At this my choice, though not by thine allow'd
(Thy judgment herding with the common crowd),
Thou tak'ſt unjuſt offence; and, led by them,
Doſt leſs the merit, than the man eſteem.
Too ſharply, Tancred, by thy pride betray'd,
Haſt thou againſt the laws of kind inveigh'd:
For all th' offence is in opinion plac'd,
Which deems high birth by lowly choice debas'd.
This thought alone with fury fires thy breaſt
(For holy marriage juſtifies the reſt),
That I have ſunk the glories of the ſtate,
And mix'd my blood with a plebeian mate;
In which I wonder thou ſhould'ſt overſee
Superior cauſes, or impute to me
The fault of fortune, or the fates' decree.
Or call it heaven's imperial power alone,
Which moves on ſprings of juſtice, though unknown.

Yet this we ſee, though order'd for the beſt,
The bad exalted, and the good oppreſs'd;
Permitted laurels grace the lawleſs brow,
Th' unworthy rais'd, the worthy caſt below.
But leaving that: ſearch we the ſecret ſprings,
And backward trace the principles of things;
There ſhall we find, that when the world began,
One common maſs compos'd the mould of man;
One paſte of fleſh on all degrees beſtow'd,
And kneaded up alike with moiſtening blood.
The ſame almighty power inſpir'd the frame
With kindled life, and form'd the ſouls the ſame:
The faculties of intellect and will
Diſpens'd with equal hand, diſpos'd with equal ſkill,
Like liberty indulg'd with choice of good or ill:
Thus born alike, from virtue firſt began
The difference that diſtinguiſh'd man from man:
He claim'd no title from deſcent of blood,
But that which made him noble made him good:
Warm'd with more particles of heavenly flame,
He wing'd his upright flight, and ſoar'd to fame;
The reſt remain'd below, a tribe without a name.
This law, though cuſtom now diverts the courſe,
As nature's inſtitute, is yet in force;
Uncancel'd, though diſus'd; and he, whoſe mind
Is virtuous, is alone of noble kind;
Though poor in fortune, of celeſtial race;
And he commits the crime who calls him baſe.
Now lay the line; and meaſure all thy court,
By inward virtue, not external port;

And find whom juſtly to prefer above
The man on whom my judgment plac'd my love:
So ſhalt thou ſee his parts and perſon ſhine;
And, thus compar'd, the reſt a baſe degenerate line.
Nor took I, when I firſt ſurvey'd thy court,
His valour, or his virtues, on report;
But truſted what I ought to truſt alone,
Relying on thy eyes, and not my own;
Thy praiſe (and thine was then the public voice)
Firſt recommended Guiſcard to my choice:
Directed thus by thee, I look'd, and found
A man I thought deſerving to be crown'd;
Firſt by my father pointed to my ſight,
Nor leſs conſpicuous by his native light;
His mind, his mien, the features of his face,
Excelling all the reſt of human race:
Theſe were thy thoughts, and thou could'ſt judge aright,
Till intereſt made a jaundice in thy ſight;
Or ſhould I grant thou didſt not rightly ſee;
Then thou wert firſt deceiv'd, and I deceiv'd by thee.
But if thou ſhalt alledge through pride of mind,
Thy blood with one of baſe condition join'd,
'Tis falſe; for 'tis not baſeneſs to be poor;
His poverty augments thy crime the more;
Upbraids thy juſtice with the ſcant regard
Of worth; whom princes praiſe, they ſhould reward.
Are theſe the kings entruſted by the crowd
With wealth, to be diſpens'd for common good?
The people ſweat not for their king's delight,
T' enrich a pimp, or raiſe a paraſite;

Theirs

Theirs is the toil; and he who well has ſerv'd
His country, has his country's wealth deſerv'd.
Ev'n mighty monarchs oft are meanly born,
And kings by birth to loweſt rank return;
All ſubject to the power of giddy chance,
For fortune can depreſs, or can advance:
But true nobility is of the mind,
Not given by chance, and not to chance deſign'd.
For the remaining doubt of thy decree,
What to reſolve, and how diſpoſe of me,
Be warn'd to caſt that uſeleſs care aſide,
Myſelf alone will for myſelf provide.
If, in thy doting and decrepit age,
Thy ſoul, a ſtranger in thy youth to rage,
Begins in cruel deeds to take delight,
Gorge with my blood thy barbarous appetite;
For I ſo little am diſpos'd to pray
For life, I would not caſt a wiſh away.
Such as it is, th' offence is all my own;
And what to Guiſcard is already done,
Or to be done, is doom'd by thy decree,
That, if not executed firſt by thee,
Shall on my perſon be perform'd by me.
Away, with women weep, and leave me here,
Fix'd like a man, to die without a tear;
Or ſave, or ſlay us both this preſent hour,
'Tis all that fate has left within thy power.
She ſaid; nor did her father fail to find,
In all ſhe ſpoke, the greatneſs of her mind;

Yet thought ſhe was not obſtinate to die,
Nor deem'd the death ſhe promis'd was ſo nigh:
Secure in this belief, he left the dame,
Reſolv'd to ſpare her life, and ſave her ſhame;
But that deteſted object to remove,
To wreak his vengeance, and to cure her love.
Intent on this, a ſecret order ſign'd,
The death of Guiſcard to his guards enjoin'd;
Strangling was choſen, and the night the time,
A mute revenge, and blind as was the crime:
His faithful heart, a bloody ſacrifice,
Torn from his breaſt, to glut the tyrant's eyes,
Clos'd the ſevere command (for ſlaves to pay):
What kings decree, the ſoldier muſt obey:
Wag'd againſt foes; and when the wars are o'er,
Fit only to maintain deſpotic power:
Dangerous to freedom, and deſir'd alone
By kings, who ſeek an arbitrary throne;
Such were theſe guards; as ready to have ſlain
The prince himſelf, allur'd with greater gain;
So was the charge perform'd with better will,
By men inur'd to blood, and exercis'd in ill.
Now, though the ſullen ſire had eas'd his mind,
The pomp of his revenge was yet behind,
A pomp prepar'd to grace the preſent he deſign'd.
A goblet rich with gems, and rough with gold,
Of depth, and breadth, the precious pledge to hold,
With cruel care he choſe: the hollow part
Inclos'd, the lid conceal'd the lover's heart:

Then

Then of his truſted miſchiefs one he ſent,
And bade him with theſe words the gift preſent:
Thy father ſends thee this to cheer thy breaſt,
And glad thy ſight with what thou lov'ſt the beſt;
As thou haſt pleas'd his eyes, and joy'd his mind,
With what he lov'd the moſt of human-kind.
Ere this the royal dame, who well had weigh'd
The conſequence of what her ſire had ſaid,
Fix'd on her fate, againſt th' expected hour,
Procur'd the means to have it in her power;
For this, ſhe had diſtill'd with early care
The juice of ſimples friendly to deſpair,
A magazine of death; and thus prepar'd,
Secure to die, the fatal meſſage heard:
Then ſmil'd ſevere; nor with a troubled look,
Or trembling hand, the funeral preſent took:
Ev'n kept her countenance, when the lid remov'd
Diſclos'd the heart, unfortunately lov'd;
She needed not be told, within whoſe breaſt
It lodg'd; the meſſage had explain'd the reſt.
Or not amaz'd, or hiding her ſurprize,
She ſternly on the bearer fix'd her eyes:
Then thus; Tell Tancred, on his daughter's part,
The gold, though precious, equals not the heart:
But he did well to give his beſt; and I,
Who wiſh'd a worthier urn, forgive his poverty.
At this ſhe curb'd a groan, that elſe had come,
And, pauſing, view'd the preſent in the tomb;
Then, to the heart ador'd devoutly glew'd
Her lips, and, raiſing it, her ſpeech renew'd:

Ev'n

Ev'n from my day of birth, to this, the bound
Of my unhappy being, I have found
My father's care and tenderneſs expreſs'd;
But this laſt act of love excels the reſt:
For this ſo dear a preſent, bear him back
The beſt return that I can live to make.
The meſſenger diſpatch'd, again ſhe view'd
The lov'd remains, and ſighing thus purſued:
Source of my life, and lord of my deſires,
In whom I liv'd, with whom my ſoul expires,
Poor heart, no more the ſpring of vital heat,
Curs'd be the hands that tore thee from thy ſeat!
The courſe is finiſh'd which thy fates decreed,
And thou from thy corporeal priſon freed:
Soon haſt thou reach'd the goal with mended pace,
A world of woes diſpatch'd in little ſpace;
Forc'd by thy worth, thy foe, in death become
Thy friend, has lodg'd thee in a coſtly tomb.
There yet remain'd thy funeral exequies,
The weeping tribute of thy widow's eyes,
And thoſe, indulgent heaven has found the way
That I, before my death, have leave to pay.
My father ev'n in cruelty is kind,
Or heaven has turn'd the malice of his mind
To better uſes than his hate deſign'd;
And made th' inſult, which in his gift appears,
The means to mourn thee with my pious tears;
Which I will pay thee down, before I go,
And ſave myſelf the pains to weep below,

If

If ſouls can weep; though once I meant to meet
My fate with face unmov'd, and eyes unwet,
Yet ſince I have thee here in narrow room,
My tears ſhall ſet thee firſt afloat within thy tomb:
Then (as I know thy ſpirit hovers nigh)
Under thy friendly conduct will I fly
To regions unexplor'd, ſecure to ſhare
Thy ſtate; nor hell ſhall puniſhment appear;
And heaven is double heaven, if thou art there.
She ſaid: her brimful eyes, that ready ſtood,
And only wanted will to keep a flood,
Releas'd their watery ſtore, and pour'd amain,
Like clouds low hung, a ſober ſhower of rain;
Mute ſolemn ſorrow, free from female noiſe,
Such as the majeſty of grief deſtroys;
For, bending o'er the cup, the tears ſhe ſhed
Seem'd by the poſture to diſcharge her head,
O'erfill'd before (and oft her mouth apply'd
To the cold heart); ſhe kiſs'd at once, and cry'd.
Her maids, who ſtood amaz'd, nor knew the cauſe
Of her complaining, nor whoſe heart it was;
Yet all due meaſures of her mourning kept,
Did office at the dirge, and by infection wept;
And oft enquir'd th' occaſion of her grief
(Unanſwer'd but by ſighs), and offer'd vain relief.
At length, her ſtock of tears already ſhed,
She wip'd her eyes, ſhe rais'd her drooping head,
And thus purſued: O ever faithful heart,
I have perform'd the ceremonial part,

The

The decencies of grief; it reſts behind,
That, as our bodies were, our ſouls be join'd;
To thy whate'er abode, my ſhade convey,
And, as an elder ghoſt, direct the way.
She ſaid; and bade the vial to be brought,
Where ſhe before had brew'd the deadly draught:
Firſt pouring out the med'cinable bane,
The heart, her tears had rins'd, ſhe bath'd again;
Then down her throat the death ſecurely throws,
And quaffs a long oblivion of her woes.
This done, ſhe mounts the genial bed, and there
(Her body firſt compos'd with honeſt care)
Attends the welcome reſt; her hands yet hold
Cloſe to her heart the monumental gold;
Nor farther word ſhe ſpoke, but clos'd her ſight,
And quiet ſought the covert of the night.
The damſels, who the while in ſilence mourn'd,
Not knowing, nor ſuſpecting death ſuborn'd,
Yet, as their duty was, to Tancred ſent;
Who, conſcious of th' occaſion, fear'd th' event.
Alarm'd, and with preſaging heart, he came,
And drew the curtains, and expos'd the dame
To loathſome light: then with a late relief
Made vain efforts, to mitigate her grief.
She, what ſhe could, excluding day, her eyes
Kept firmly ſeal'd, and ſternly thus replies:
Tancred, reſtrain thy tears, unſought by me,
And ſorrow unavailing now to thee:
Did ever man before afflict his mind,
To ſee th' effect of what himſelf deſign'd?

Yet,

Yet, if thou haſt remaining in thy heart
Some ſenſe of love, ſome unextinguiſh'd part
Of former kindneſs, largely once profeſs'd,
Let me by that adjure thy harden'd breaſt,
Not to deny thy daughter's laſt requeſt:
The ſecret love which I ſo long enjoy'd,
And ſtill conceal'd to gratify thy pride,
Thou haſt disjoin'd; but, with my dying breath,
Seek not, I beg thee, to disjoin our death;
Where'er his corpſe by thy command is laid,
Thither let mine in public be convey'd;
Expos'd in open view, and ſide by ſide,
Acknowledg'd as a bridegroom and a bride.
The prince's anguiſh hinder'd his reply:
And ſhe, who felt her fate approaching nigh,
Seiz'd the cold heart, and, heaving to her breaſt,
Here, precious pledge, ſhe ſaid, ſecurely reſt!
Theſe accents were her laſt; the creeping death
Benumb'd her ſenſes firſt, then ſtopp'd her breath.
Thus ſhe for diſobedience juſtly dy'd:
The ſire was juſtly puniſh'd for his pride:
The youth, leaſt guilty, ſuffer'd for th' offence,
Of duty violated to his prince;
Who, late repenting of his cruel deed,
One common ſepulchre for both decreed;
Intomb'd the wretched pair in royal ſtate,
And on their monument inſcrib'd their fate.

THE-

THEODORE AND HONORIA.

OF all the cities in Romanian lands,
The chief, and moſt renown'd, Ravenna ſtands,
Adorn'd in ancient times with arms and arts,
And rich inhabitants, with generous hearts.
But Theodore the brave, above the reſt,
With gifts of fortune and of nature bleſs'd,
The foremoſt place for wealth and honour held,
And all in feats of chivalry excell'd.
This noble youth to madneſs lov'd a dame
Of high degree, Honoria was her name;
Fair as the faireſt, but of haughty mind,
And fiercer than became ſo ſoft a kind,
Proud of her birth (for equal ſhe had none);
The reſt ſhe ſcorn'd; but hated him alone,
His gifts, his conſtant courtſhip, nothing gain'd;
For ſhe, the more he lov'd, the more diſdain'd.
He liv'd with all the pomp he could deviſe,
At tilts and tournaments obtain'd the prize;
But found no favour in his lady's eyes:
Relentleſs as a rock, the lofty maid,
Turn'd all to poiſon, that he did or ſaid:
Nor prayers, nor tears, nor offer'd vows, could move;
The work went backward; and the more he ſtrove
T' advance his ſuit, the farther from her love.

Weary'd at length, and wanting remedy,
He doubted oft, and oft reſolv'd to die.
But pride ſtood ready to prevent the blow,
For who would die to gratify a foe?
His generous mind diſdain'd ſo mean a fate;
That paſs'd, his next endeavour was to hate.
But vainer that relief than all the reſt,
The leſs he hop'd, with more deſire poſſeſs'd;
Love ſtood the ſiege, and would not yield his breaſt.
Change was the next, but change deceiv'd his care;
He ſought a fairer, but found none ſo fair.
He would have worn her out by ſlow degrees,
As men by faſting ſtarve th' untam'd diſeaſe:
But preſent love requir'd a preſent eaſe.
Looking he feeds alone his famiſh'd eyes,
Feeds lingering death, but looking not he dies.
Yet ſtill he choſe the longeſt way to fate,
Waſting at once his life and his eſtate.
His friends beheld, and pity'd him in vain,
For what advice can eaſe a lover's pain!
Abſence, the beſt expedient they could find,
Might ſave the fortune, if not cure the mind:
This means they long propos'd, but little gain'd,
Yet, after much purſuit, at length obtain'd.
Hard you may think it was to give conſent,
But ſtruggling with his own deſires he went,
With large expence, and with a pompous train,
Provided as to viſit France and Spain,
Or for ſome diſtant voyage o'er the main.

But

But love had clipp'd his wings, and cut him ſhort,
Confin'd within the purlieus of the court.
Three miles he went, nor farther could retreat;
His travels ended at his country-ſeat:
To Chaſſis' pleaſing plains he took his way,
There pitch'd his tents, and there reſolv'd to ſtay.
The ſpring was in the prime; the neighbouring grove
Supply'd with birds, the choiriſters of love:
Muſic unbought, that miniſter'd delight
To morning walks, and lull'd his cares by night:
There he diſcharg'd his friends; but not th' expence
Of frequent treats, and proud magnificence.
He liv'd as kings retire, though more at large
From public buſineſs, yet with equal charge;
With houſe and heart ſtill open to receive;
As well content as love would give him leave:
He would have liv'd more free; but many a gueſt,
Who could forſake the friend, purſued the feaſt.
It hapt one morning, as his fancy led,
Before his uſual hour he left his bed;
To walk within a lonely lawn, that ſtood
On every ſide ſurrounded by a wood:
Alone he walk'd, to pleaſe his penſive mind,
And ſought the deepeſt ſolitude to find;
'Twas in a grove of ſpreading pines he ſtray'd;
The winds within the quivering branches play'd,
And dancing trees a mournful muſic made.
The place itſelf was ſuiting to his care,
Uncouth and ſavage, as the cruel fair.

He wander'd on, unknowing where he went,
Loſt in the wood, and all on love intent:
The day already half his race had run,
And ſummon'd him to due repaſt at noon,
But love could feel no hunger but his own.

Whilſt liſtening to the murmuring leaves he ſtood,
More than a mile immers'd within the wood,
At once the wind was laid; the whiſpering ſound
Was dumb; a riſing earthquake rock'd the ground;
With deeper brown the grove was overſpread;
A ſudden horror ſeiz'd his giddy head,
And his ears tinkled, and his colour fled,
Nature was in alarm; ſome danger nigh
Seem'd threaten'd, though unſeen to mortal eye.
Unus'd to fear, he ſummon'd all his ſoul,
And ſtood collected in himſelf, and whole;
Not long: for ſoon a whirlwind roſe around,
And from afar he heard a ſcreaming ſound,
As of a dame diſtreſs'd, who cry'd for aid,
And fill'd with loud laments the ſecret ſhade.

A thicket cloſe beſide the grove there ſtood,
With briers and brambles choak'd, and dwarfiſh wood;
From thence the noiſe, which now, approaching near,
With more diſtinguiſh'd notes invades his ear;
He rais'd his head, and ſaw a beauteous maid,
With hair diſhevel'd, iſſuing through the ſhade;
Stripp'd of her cloaths, and ev'n thoſe parts reveal'd,
Which modeſt nature keeps from ſight conceal'd.
Her face, her hands, her naked limbs were torn,
With paſſing through the brakes, and prickly thorn;

Two maſtiffs gaunt and grim her flight purſued,
And oft their faſten'd fangs in blood embrued:
Oft they came up, and pinch'd her tender ſide,
Mercy, O mercy, heaven! ſhe ran, and cry'd;
When heaven was nam'd, they loos'd their hold again,
Then ſprang ſhe forth, they follow'd her amain.
Not far behind, a knight of ſwarthy face,
High on a coal-black ſteed purſued the chace;
With flaſhing flames his ardent eyes were fill'd,
And in his hand a naked ſword he held:
He chear'd the dogs to follow her who fled,
And vow'd revenge on her devoted head.
As Theodore was born of noble kind,
The brutal action rous'd his manly mind;
Mov'd with unworthy uſage of the maid,
He, though unarm'd, reſolv'd to give her aid.
A ſaplin pine he wrench'd from out the ground,
The readieſt weapon that his fury found.
Thus furniſh'd for offence, he croſs'd the way
Betwixt the graceleſs villain and his prey.
The knight came thundering on, but, from afar,
Thus in imperious tone forbad the war:
Ceaſe, Theodore, to proffer vain relief,
Nor ſtop the vengeance of ſo juſt a grief;
But give me leave to ſeize my deſtin'd prey,
And let eternal juſtice take the way:
I but revenge my fate, diſdain'd, betray'd,
And ſuffering death for this ungrateful maid.
He ſaid, at once diſmounting from the ſteed;
For now the hell-hounds with ſuperior ſpeed

Had reach'd the dame, and, faſtening on her ſide,
The ground with iſſuing ſtreams of purple dy'd,
Stood Theodore ſurpriz'd in deadly fright,
With chattering teeth, and briſtling hair upright;
Yet arm'd with inborn worth, Whate'er, ſaid he,
Thou art, who know'ſt me better than I thee;
Or prove thy rightful cauſe, or be defy'd;
The ſpectre, fiercely ſtaring, thus reply'd:
Know, Theodore, thy anceſtry I claim,
And Guido Cavalcanti was my name.
One common ſire our fathers did beget,
My name and ſtory ſome remember yet:
Thee, then a boy, within my arms I laid,
When for my ſins I lov'd this haughty maid;
Not leſs ador'd in life, nor ſerv'd by me,
Than proud Honoria now is lov'd by thee.
What did I not her ſtubborn heart to gain?
But all my vows were anſwer'd with diſdain:
She ſcorn'd my ſorrows, and deſpis'd my pain.
Long time I dragg'd my days in fruitleſs care;
Then, loathing life, and plung'd in deep deſpair,
To finiſh my unhappy life, I fell
On this ſharp ſword, and now am damn'd in hell.
Short was her joy; for ſoon th' inſulting maid
By heaven's decree in this cold grave was laid.
And as in unrepented ſin ſhe dy'd,
Doom'd to the ſame bad place is puniſh'd for her pride:
Becauſe ſhe deem'd I well deſerv'd to die,
And made a merit of her cruelty.

There, then, we met; both try'd, and both were caſt,
And this irrevocable ſentence paſs'd;
That ſhe, whom I ſo long purſued in vain,
Should ſuffer from my hands a lingering pain:
Renew'd to life that ſhe might daily die,
I daily doom'd to follow, ſhe to fly;
No more a lover, but a mortal foe,
I ſeek her life (for love is none below):
As often as my dogs with better ſpeed
Arreſt her flight, is ſhe to death decreed:
Then with this fatal ſword, on which I dy'd,
I pierce her open back, or tender ſide,
And tear that harden'd heart from out her breaſt,
Which, with her entrails, makes my hungry hounds a feaſt.
Nor lies ſhe long, but, as her fates ordain,
Springs up to life, and freſh to ſecond pain,
Is ſav'd to-day, to-morrow to be ſlain.
This, vers'd in death, th' infernal knight relates,
And then for proof fulfill'd the common fates;
Her heart and bowels through her back he drew,
And fed the hounds that help'd him to purſue.
Stern look'd the fiend, as fruſtrate of his will,
Not half ſuffic'd, and greedy yet to kill.
And now the ſoul, expiring through the wound,
Had left the body breathleſs on the ground,
When thus the griſly ſpectre ſpoke again:
Behold the fruit of ill-rewarded pain:
As many months as I ſuſtain'd her hate,
So many years is ſhe condemn'd by fate

To daily death; and every ſeveral place,
Conſcious of her diſdain and my diſgrace,
Muſt witneſs her juſt puniſhment; and be
A ſcene of triumph and revenge to me!
As in this grove I took my laſt farewel,
As on this very ſpot of earth I fell,
As Friday ſaw me die, ſo ſhe my prey
Becomes ev'n here, on this revolving day.
Thus while he ſpoke, the virgin from the ground
Upſtarted freſh, already clos'd the wound,
And, unconcern'd for all ſhe felt before,
Precipitates her flight along the ſhore:
The hell-hounds, as ungorg'd with fleſh and blood,
Purſue their prey, and ſeek their wonted food:
The fiend remounts his courſer, mends his pace;
And all the viſion vaniſh'd from the place.
Long ſtood the noble youth oppreſs'd with awe
And ſtupid at the wondrous things he ſaw,
Surpaſſing common faith, tranſgreſſing nature's law:
He would have been aſleep, and wiſh'd to wake,
But dreams, he knew, no long impreſſion make,
Though ſtrong at firſt; if viſion, to what end,
But ſuch as muſt his future ſtate portend?
His love the damſel, and himſelf the fiend.
But yet, reflecting that it could not be
From heaven, which cannot impious acts decree,
Reſolv'd within himſelf to ſhun the ſnare,
Which hell for his deſtruction did prepare;
And, as his better genius ſhould direct,
From an ill cauſe to draw a good effect.

Inſpir'd

Inſpir'd from heaven he homeward took his way,
Nor pall'd his new deſign with long delay:
But of his train a truſty ſervant ſent
To call his friends together at his tent.
They came, and, uſual ſalutations paid,
With words premeditated thus he ſaid:
What you have often counſel'd, to remove
My vain purſuit of unregarded love;
By thrift my ſinking fortune to repair,
Though late yet is at laſt become my care:
My heart ſhall be my own; my vaſt expence
Reduc'd to bounds, by timely providence;
This only I require; invite for me
Honoria, with her father's family,
Her friends, and mine; the cauſe I ſhall diſplay,
On Friday next; for that 's th' appointed day.
Well pleas'd were all his friends, the taſk was light,
The father, mother, daughter, they invite;
Hardly the dame was drawn to this repaſt;
But yet reſolv'd, becauſe it was the laſt.
The day was come, the gueſts invited came,
And, with the reſt, th' inexorable dame:
A feaſt prepar'd with riotous expence,
Much coſt, more care, and moſt magnificence.
The place ordain'd was in that haunted grove,
Where the revenging ghoſt purſued his love:
The tables in a proud pavilion ſpread,
With flowers below, and tiſſue overhead:
The reſt in rank, Honoria chief in place,
Was artfully contriv'd to ſet her face
To front the thicket, and behold the chace.

The

The feaſt was ſerv'd, the time ſo well forecaſt,
That juſt when the deſert and fruits were plac'd,
The fiend's alarm began; the hollow ſound
Sung in the leaves, the foreſt ſhook around,
Air blacken'd, roll'd the thunder, groan'd the ground.
Nor long before the loud laments ariſe,
Of one diſtreſs'd, and maſtiffs mingled cries;
And firſt the dame came ruſhing through the wood,
And next the famiſh'd hounds that ſought their food,
And grip'd her flanks, and oft eſſay'd their jaws in blood.
Laſt came the felon, on his ſable ſteed,
Arm'd with his naked ſword, and urg'd his dogs to ſpeed.
She ran, and cry'd, her flight directly bent
(A gueſt unbidden) to the fatal tent,
The ſcene of death, and place ordain'd for puniſhment.
Loud was the noiſe, aghaſt was every gueſt,
The women ſhriek'd, the men forſook the feaſt;
The hounds at nearer diſtance hoarſely bay'd;
The hunter cloſe purſued the viſionary maid,
She rent the heaven with loud laments, imploring aid.
The gallants, to protect the lady's right,
Their fauchions brandiſh'd at the griſly ſpright;
High on his ſtirrups he provok'd the fight.
Then on the crowd he caſt a furious look,
And wither'd all their ſtrength before he ſpoke:
Back on your lives; let be, ſaid he, my prey,
And let my vengeance take the deſtin'd way:
Vain are your arms, and vainer your defence,
Againſt th' eternal doom of Providence:

Mine

Mine is th' ungrateful maid by heaven deſign'd;
Mercy ſhe would not give, nor mercy ſhall ſhe find.
At this the former tale again he told
With thundering tone, and dreadful to behold:
Sunk were their hearts with horror of the crime,
Nor needed to be warn'd a ſecond time,
But bore each other back: ſome knew the face,
And all had heard the much-lamented caſe
Of him who fell for love, and this the fatal place.
And now th' infernal miniſter advanc'd,
Seiz'd the due victim, and with fury launch'd
Her back, and, piercing through her inmoſt heart,
Drew backward as before th' offending part.
The reeking entrails next he tore away,
And to his meagre maſtiffs made a prey.
The pale aſſiſtants on each other ſtar'd,
With gaping mouths for iſſuing words prepar'd;
The ſtill-born ſounds upon the palate hung,
And dy'd imperfect on the faultering tongue.
The fright was general; but the female band
(A helpleſs train) in more confuſion ſtand:
With horror ſhuddering, on a heap they run,
Sick at the ſight of hateful juſtice done;
For conſcience rung th' alarm, and made the caſe their own.
So, ſpread upon a lake with upward eye,
A plump of fowl behold their foe on high;
They cloſe their trembling troop; and all attend
On whom the ſowſing eagle will deſcend.

But

But moſt the proud Honoria fear'd th' event,
And thought to her alone the viſion ſent.
Her guilt preſents to her diſtracted mind
Heaven's juſtice, Theodore's revengeful kind,
And the ſame fate to the ſame ſin aſſign'd.
Already ſees herſelf the monſter's prey,
And feels her heart and entrails torn away.
'Twas a mute ſcene of ſorrow, mix'd with fear;
Still on the table lay th' unfiniſh'd cheer:
The knight and hungry maſtiffs ſtood around,
The mangled dame lay breathleſs on the ground;
When on a ſudden, re-inſpir'd with breath,
Again ſhe roſe, again to ſuffer death;
Nor ſtaid the hell-hounds, nor the hunter ſtaid,
But follow'd, as before, the flying maid:
Th' avenger took from earth th' avenging ſword,
And mounting light as air his ſable ſteed he ſpurr'd:
The clouds diſpell'd, the ſky reſum'd her light,
And nature ſtood recover'd of her fright.
But fear, the laſt of ills, remain'd behind,
And horror heavy ſat on every mind.
Nor Theodore encourag'd more the feaſt,
But ſternly look'd, as hatching in his breaſt
Some deep deſigns; which when Honoria view'd,
The freſh impulſe her former fright renew'd;
She thought herſelf the trembling dame who fled,
And him the griſly ghoſt that ſpurr'd th' infernal ſteed:
The more diſmay'd, for when the gueſts withdrew,
Their courteous hoſt, ſaluting all the crew,
Regardleſs paſs'd her o'er; nor grac'd with kind adieu;

That

That ſting infix'd within her haughty mind,
The downfall of her empire ſhe divin'd;
And her proud heart with ſecret ſorrow pin'd.
Home as they went, the ſad diſcourſe renew'd,
Of the relentleſs dame to death purſued,
And of the fight obſcene ſo lately view'd.
None durſt arraign the righteous doom ſhe bore,
Ev'n they who pity'd moſt, yet blam'd her more:
The parallel they needed not to name,
But in the dead they damn'd the living dame.
At every little noiſe ſhe look'd behind,
For ſtill the knight was preſent to her mind:
And anxious oft ſhe ſtarted on the way,
And thought the horſeman-ghoſt came thundering for his prey.
Return'd, ſhe took her bed with little reſt,
But in ſhort ſlumbers dreamt the funeral feaſt:
Awak'd, ſhe turn'd her ſide, and ſlept again;
The ſame black vapours mounted in her brain,
And the ſame dreams return'd with double pain.
Now forc'd to wake, becauſe afraid to ſleep,
Her blood all fever'd, with a furious leap
She ſprang from bed, diſtracted in her mind,
And fear'd, at every ſtep, a twitching ſpright behind.
Darkling and deſperate, with a ſtaggering pace,
Of death afraid, and conſcious of diſgrace;
Fear, pride, remorſe, at once her heart aſſail'd,
Pride put remorſe to flight, but fear prevail'd.
Friday, the fatal day, when next it came,
Her ſoul forethought the fiend would change his game,
And

And her purſue, or Theodore be ſlain,
And two ghoſts join their packs to hunt her o'er the plain.
This dreadful image ſo poſſeſs'd her mind,
That, deſperate any ſuccour elſe to find,
She ceas'd all farther hope; and now began
To make reflexion on th' unhappy man.
Rich, brave, and young, who paſt expreſſion lov'd,
Proof to diſdain, and not to be remov'd:
Of all the men reſpected and admir'd,
Of all the dames, except herſelf, deſir'd:
Why not of her? preferr'd above the reſt
By him with knightly deeds, and open love profeſs'd?
So had another been, where he his vows addreſs'd.
This quell'd her pride, yet other doubts remain'd,
That, once diſdaining, ſhe might be diſdain'd.
The fear was juſt, but greater fear prevail'd,
Fear of her life by helliſh hounds aſſail'd:
He took a lowering leave; but who can tell,
What outward hate might inward love conceal?
Her ſex's arts ſhe knew; and why not, then,
Might deep diſſembling have a place in men?
Here hope began to dawn; reſolv'd to try,
She fix'd on this her utmoſt remedy:
Death was behind, but hard it was to die.
'Twas time enough at laſt on death to call,
The precipice in ſight: a ſhrub was all,
That kindly ſtood betwixt to break the fatal fall.
One maid ſhe had, belov'd above the reſt;
Secure of her, the ſecret ſhe confeſs'd;

And

And now the chearful light her fears d'ſpell'd,
She with no winding turns the truth conceal'd,
But put the woman off, and ſtood reveal'd:
With faults confeſs'd commiſſion'd her to go,
If pity yet had place, and reconcile her foe;
The welcome meſſage made, was ſoon receiv'd;
'Twas to be wiſh'd, and hop'd, but ſcarce believ'd;
Fate ſpar'd a fair occaſion to preſent;
He knew the ſex, and fear'd ſhe might repent,
Should he delay the moment of conſent.
There yet remain'd to gain her friends (a care
The modeſty of maidens well might ſpare);
But ſhe with ſuch a zeal the cauſe embrac'd
(As women, where they will, are all in haſte);
The father, mother, and the kin beſide,
Were overborn by fury of the tide;
With full conſent of all ſhe chang'd her ſtate;
Reſiſtleſs in her love, as in her hate.
By her example warn'd, the reſt beware;
More eaſy, leſs imperious, were the fair;
And that one hunting, which the devil deſign'd
For one fair female, loſt him half the kind.

CYMON

CYMON AND IPHIGENIA.

POETA LOQUITUR.

OLD as I am, for ladies love unfit,
The power of beauty I remember yet.
Which once inflam'd my ſoul, and ſtill inſpires my wit.
If love be folly, the ſevere divine
Has felt that folly, though he cenſures mine;
Pollutes the pleaſures of a chaſte embrace,
Acts what I write, and propagates in grace,
With riotous exceſs, a prieſtly race.
Suppoſe him free, and that I forge th' offence,
He ſhew'd the way, perverting firſt my ſenſe:
In malice witty, and with venom fraught,
He makes me ſpeak the things I never thought.
Compute the gains of his ungovern'd zeal;
Ill ſuits his cloth the praiſe of railing well.
The world will think that what we looſely write,
Though now arraign'd, he read with ſome delight;
Becauſe he ſeems to chew the cud again,
When his broad comment makes the text too plain;
And teaches more in one explaining page,
Than all the double-meanings of the ſtage.
What needs he paraphraſe on what we mean?
We were at worſt but wanton; he 's obſcene.
I not my fellows nor myſelf excuſe;
But love 's the ſubject of the comic Muſe;

Nor

Nor can we write without it, nor would you
A tale of only dry inſtruction view;
Nor love is always of a vicious kind,
But oft to virtuous acts inflames the mind,
Awakes the ſleepy vigour of the ſoul,
And bruſhing o'er adds motion to the pool.
Love, ſtudious how to pleaſe, improves our parts
With poliſh'd manners, and adorns with arts.
Love firſt invented verſe, and form'd the rhyme,
The motion meaſur'd, harmoniz'd the chime;
To liberal acts enlarg'd the narrow-ſoul'd,
Soften'd the fierce, and made the coward bold:
The world, when waſte, he peopled with increaſe,
And warring nations reconcil'd in peace.
Ormond, the firſt, and all the fair may find,
In this one legend, to their fame deſign'd,
When beauty fires the blood, how love exalts the mind.

IN that ſweet iſle where Venus keeps her court,
And every grace, and all the loves, reſort;
Where either ſex is form'd of ſofter earth,
And takes the bent of pleaſure from their birth;
There liv'd a Cyprian lord above the reſt
Wiſe, wealthy, with a numerous iſſue bleſs'd.
But as no gift of fortune is ſincere,
Was only wanting in a worthy heir;
His eldeſt born, a goodly youth to view,
Excell'd the reſt in ſhape, and outward ſhew,
Fair, tall, his limbs with due proportion join'd,
But of a heavy, dull, degenerate mind.

His ſoul bely'd the features of his face;
Beauty was there, but beauty in diſgrace.
A clowniſh mien, a voice with ruſtic ſound,
And ſtupid eyes that ever lov'd the ground.
He look'd like nature's error, as the mind
And body were not of a piece deſign'd,
But made for two, and by miſtake in one were join'd.
The ruling rod, the father's forming care,
Were exercis'd in vain on wit's deſpair;
The more inform'd, the leſs he underſtood,
And deeper ſunk by floundering in the mud.
Now ſcorn'd of all, and grown the public ſhame,
The people from Galeſus chang'd his name,
And Cymon call'd, which ſignifies a brute;
So well his name d'd with his nature ſuit.
His father, when he found his labour loſt,
And care employ'd that anſwer'd not the coſt,
Choſe an ungrateful object to remove,
And loath'd to ſee what nature made him love;
So to his country farm the fool confin'd;
Rude work well ſuited with a ruſtic mind.
Thus to the wilds the ſturdy Cymon went,
A ſquire among the ſwains, and pleas'd with baniſhment.
His corn and cattle were his only care,
And his ſupreme delight, a country fair.
It happen'd on a ſummer's holiday,
That to the green-wood ſhade he took his way;
For Cymon ſhunn'd the church, and us'd not much to pray.

His

His quarter-ſtaff, which he could ne'er forſake,
Hung half before, and half behind his back.
He trudg'd along, unknowing what he ſought,
And whiſtled as he went for want of thought.
By chance conducted, or by thirſt conſtrain'd,
The deep receſſes of the grove he gain'd;
Where, in a plain defended by the wood,
Crept through the matted graſs a cryſtal flood,
By which an alabaſter fountain ſtood:
And on the margin of the fount was laid
(Attended by her ſlaves) a ſleeping maid.
Like Dian and her nymphs, when, tir'd with ſport,
To reſt by cool Eurotas they reſort:
The dame herſelf the goddeſs well expreſs'd,
Not more diſtinguiſh'd by her purple veſt,
Than by the charming features of her face,
And ev'n in ſlumber a ſuperior grace:
Her comely limbs compos'd with decent care,
Her body ſhaded with a ſlight cymarr;
Her boſom to the view was only bare:
Where two beginning paps were ſcarcely ſpy'd,
For yet their places were but ſignify'd:
The fanning wind upon her boſom blows,
To meet the fanning wind the boſom roſe;
The fanning wind, and purling ſtreams, continue her repoſe.
The fool of nature ſtood with ſtupid eyes,
And gaping mouth that teſtify'd ſurprize,
Fix'd on her face, nor could remove his ſight,
New as he was to love, and novice to delight:

Long mute he ſtood, and leaning on his ſtaff,
His wonder witneſs'd with an idiot laugh;
Then would have ſpoke, but by his glimmering ſenſe
Firſt found his want of words, and fear'd offence:
Doubted for what he was he ſhould be known,
By his clown accent, and his country tone.
Through the rude chaos thus the running light
Shot the firſt ray that pierc'd the native night:
Then day and darkneſs in the maſs were mix'd,
Till gather'd in a globe the beams were fix'd:
Laſt ſhone the ſun, who, radiant in his ſphere,
Illumin'd heaven and earth, and roll'd around the year.
So reaſon in this brutal ſoul began,
Love made him firſt ſuſpect he was a man;
Love made him doubt his broad barbarian ſound;
By love his want of words and wit he found;
That ſenſe of want prepar'd the future way
To knowledge, and diſclos'd the promiſe of a day.
What not his father's care, nor tutor's art,
Could plant with pains in his unpoliſh'd heart,
The beſt inſtructor, love, at once inſpir'd,
As barren grounds to fruitfulneſs are fir'd:
Love taught him ſhame; and ſhame, with love at ſtrife,
Soon taught the ſweet civilities of life;
His groſs material ſoul at once could find
Somewhat in her excelling all her kind:
Exciting a deſire till then unknown,
Somewhat unfound, or found in her alone.
This made the firſt impreſſion on his mind,
Above, but juſt above, the brutal kind.

For beaſts can like, but not diſtinguiſh too,
Nor their own liking by reflection know;
Nor why they like or this or t' other face,
Or judge of this or that peculiar grace;
But love in groſs, and ſtupidly admire:
As flies, allur'd by light, approach the fire.
Thus our man-beaſt, advancing by degrees,
Firſt likes the whole, then ſeparates what he ſees;
On ſeveral parts a ſeveral praiſe beſtows,
The ruby lips, the well-proportion'd noſe,
The ſnowy ſkin, and raven-gloſſy hair,
The dimpled cheek, and forehead riſing fair,
And, ev'n in ſleep itſelf, a ſmiling air.
From thence his eyes deſcending view'd the reſt,
Her plump round arms, white hands, and heaving breaſt.
Long on the laſt he dwelt, though every part
A pointed arrow ſped to pierce his heart.
Thus in a trice a judge of beauty grown,
(A judge erected from a country clown)
He long'd to ſee her eyes, in ſlumber hid,
And wiſh'd his own could pierce within the lid:
He would have wak'd her, but reſtrain'd his thought,
And love new-born the firſt good-manners taught.
And awful fear his ardent wiſh withſtood,
Nor durſt diſturb the goddeſs of the wood.
For ſuch ſhe ſeem'd by her celeſtial face,
Excelling all the reſt of human race.
And things divine, by common ſenſe he knew,
Muſt be devoutly ſeen, at diſtant view:

So checking his deſire, with trembling heart
Gazing he ſtood, nor would nor could depart;
Fix'd as a pilgrim wilder'd in his way,
Who dares not ſtir by night, for fear to ſtray,
But ſtands with awful eyes to watch the dawn of day.

At length awaking, Iphigene the fair
(So was the beauty call'd who caus'd his care)
Unclos'd her eyes, and double day reveal'd,
While thoſe of all her ſlaves in ſleep were ſeal'd.

The ſlavering cudden, propp'd upon his ſtaff,
Stood ready gaping with a grinning laugh,
To welcome her awake; nor durſt begin
To ſpeak, but wiſely kept the fool within.
Then ſhe; What makes you, Cymon, here alone?
(For Cymon's name was round the country known
Becauſe deſcended of a noble race,
And for a ſoul ill ſorted with his face.)

But ſtill the ſot ſtood ſilent with ſurprize,
With fix'd regard on her new-open'd eyes,
And in his breaſt receiv'd th' invenom'd dart,
A tickling pain that pleas'd amid the ſmart.
But, conſcious of her form, with quick diſtruſt
She ſaw his ſparkling eyes, and fear'd his brutal luſt:
This to prevent, ſhe wak'd her ſleepy crew,
And, riſing haſty, took a ſhort adieu.

Then Cymon firſt his ruſtic voice eſſay'd,
With proffer'd ſervice to the parting maid
To ſee her ſafe; his hand ſhe long deny'd,
But took at length, aſham'd of ſuch a guide.

So Cymon led her home, and leaving there,
No more would to his country clowns repair,
But ſought his father's houſe, with better mind,
Refuſing in the farm to be confin'd.
The father wonder'd at the ſon's return,
And knew not whether to rejoice or mourn;
But doubtfully receiv'd, expecting ſtill
To learn the ſecret cauſes of his alter'd will.
Nor was he long delay'd: the firſt requeſt
He made, was like his brothers to be dreſs'd,
And, as his birth requir'd, above the reſt.
With eaſe his ſuit was granted by his ſire,
Diſtinguiſhing his heir by rich attire:
His body thus adorn'd, he next deſign'd
With liberal arts to cultivate his mind:
He ſought a tutor of his own accord,
And ſtudy'd leſſons he before abhorr'd.
Thus the man-child advanc'd, and learn'd ſo faſt,
That in ſhort time his equals he ſurpaſs'd:
His brutal manners from his breaſt exil'd,
His mien he faſhion'd, and his tongue he fil'd;
In every exerciſe of all admir'd,
He ſeem'd, nor only ſeem'd, but was inſpir'd:
Inſpir'd by love, whoſe buſineſs is to pleaſe;
He rode, he fenc'd, he mov'd with graceful eaſe,
More fam'd for ſenſe, for courtly carriage more,
Than for his brutal folly known before.
What then of alter'd Cymon ſhall we ſay,
But that the fire which choak'd in aſhes lay,

A load too heavy for his ſoul to move,
Was upward blown below, and bruſh'd away by love.
Love made an active progreſs through his mind,
The duſky parts he clear'd, the groſs refin'd,
The drowſy wak'd; and as he went impreſs'd
The Maker's image on the human breaſt.
Thus was the man amended by deſire,
And though he lov'd perhaps with too much fire,
His father all his faults with reaſon ſcann'd,
And lik'd an error of the better hand;
Excus'd th' exceſs of paſſion in his mind,
By flames too fierce, perhaps too much refin'd:
So Cymon, ſince his ſire indulg'd his will,
Impetuous lov'd, and would be Cymon ſtill;
Galeſus he diſown'd, and choſe to bear
The name of fool confirm'd, and biſhop'd by the fair.
To Cipſeus by his friends his ſuit he mov'd,
Cipſeus the father of the fair he lov'd:
But he was pre-engag'd by former ties,
While Cymon was endeavouring to be wiſe:
And Iphigene, oblig'd by former vows,
Had given her faith to wed a foreign ſpouſe:
Her ſire and ſhe to Rhodian Paſimond,
Though both repenting, were by promiſe bound,
Nor could retract; and thus, as fate decreed,
Though better lov'd, he ſpoke too late to ſpeed.
The doom was paſt, the ſhip already ſent
Did all his tardy diligence prevent:
Sigh'd to herſelf the fair unhappy maid,
While ſtormy Cymon thus in ſecret ſaid:

The

The time is come for Iphigene to find
The miracle ſhe wrought upon my mind:
Her charms have made me man, her raviſh'd love
In rank ſhall place me with the bleſs'd above.
For mine by love, by force ſhe ſhall be mine,
Or death, if force ſhould fail, ſhall finiſh my deſign.
Reſolv'd he ſaid; and rigg'd with ſpeedy care
A veſſel ſtrong, and well equipp'd for war.
The ſecret ſhip with choſen friends he ſtor'd;
And, bent to die or conquer, went aboard.
Ambuſh'd he lay behind the Cyprian ſhore,
Waiting the ſail that all his wiſhes bore;
Nor long expected, for the following tide
Sent out the hoſtile ſhip and beauteous bride.
To Rhodes the rival bark directly ſteer'd,
When Cymon ſudden at her back appear'd,
And ſtopp'd her flight: then, ſtanding on his prow,
In haughty terms he thus defy'd the foe;
Or ſtrike your ſails at ſummons, or prepare
To prove the laſt extremities of war.
Thus warn'd, the Rhodians for the fight provide;
Already were the veſſels ſide by ſide,
Theſe obſtinate to ſave, and thoſe to ſeize the bride.
But Cymon ſoon his crooked grapples caſt,
Which with tenacious hold his foes embrac'd,
And, arm'd with ſword and ſhield, amid the preſs he paſs'd.
Fierce was the fight, but, haſtening to his prey,
By force the furious lover freed his way:

Himſelf

Himſelf alone diſpers'd the Rhodian crew,
The weak diſdain'd, the valiant overthrew;
Cheap conqueſt for his following friends remain'd,
He reap'd the field, and they but only glean'd.
His victory confeſs'd, the foes retreat,
And caſt the weapons at the victor's feet.
Whom thus he chear'd: O Rhodian youth, I fought
For love alone, nor other booty ſought:
Your lives are ſafe; your veſſel I reſign;
Yours be your own, reſtoring what is mine:
In Iphigene I claim my rightful due,
Robb'd by my rival, and detain'd by you:
Your Paſimond a lawleſs bargain drove,
The parent could not ſell the daughter's love;
Or, if he could, my love diſdains the laws,
And like a king by conqueſt gains his cauſe:
Where arms take place, all other pleas are vain,
Love taught me force, and force ſhall love maintain.
You, what by ſtrength you could not keep, releaſe,
And at an eaſy ranſom buy your peace.
Fear on the conquer'd ſide ſoon ſign'd th' accord,
And Iphigene to Cymon was reſtor'd:
While to his arms the bluſhing bride he took;
To ſeeming ſadneſs ſhe compos'd her look;
As if by force ſubjected to his will,
Though pleas'd, diſſembling, and a woman ſtill.
And, for ſhe wept, he wip'd her falling tears,
And pray'd her to diſmiſs her empty fears;
For yours I am, he ſaid, and have deſerv'd
Your love much better whom ſo long I ſerv'd,

Than

Than he to whom your formal father ty'd
Your vows, and ſold a ſlave, not ſent a bride.
Thus while he ſpoke, he ſeiz'd the willing prey,
As Paris bore the Spartan ſpouſe away.
Faintly ſhe ſcream'd, and ev'n her eyes confeſs'd
She rather would be thought, than was diſtreſs'd.
Who now exults but Cymon in his mind?
Vain hopes and empty joys of human kind,
Proud of the preſent, to the future blind!
Secure of fate, while Cymon plows the ſea,
And ſteers to Candy with his conquer'd prey,
Scarce the third glaſs of meaſur'd hours was run,
When like a fiery meteor ſunk the ſun;
The promiſe of a ſtorm; the ſhifting gales
Forſake by fits, and fill the flagging ſails;
Hoarſe murmurs of the main from far were heard,
And night came on, not by degrees prepar'd,
But all at once; at once the winds ariſe,
The thunders roll, the forky lightning flies.
In vain the maſter iſſues out commands,
In vain the trembling ſailors ply their hands:
The tempeſt unforeſeen prevents their care,
And from the firſt they labour in deſpair.
The giddy ſhip betwixt the winds and tides,
Forc'd back, and forwards, in a circle rides,
Stunn'd with the different blows; then ſhoots amain,
Till, counterbuff'd, ſhe ſtops, and ſleeps again.
Not more aghaſt the proud archangel fell,
Flung'd from the height of heaven to deepeſt hell,

Than

Than ſtood the lover of his love poſſeſs'd,
Now curs'd the more, the more he had been bleſs'd;
More anxious for her danger than his own,
Death he defies; but would be loſt alone.
Sad Iphigene to womaniſh complaints
Adds pious prayers, and wearies all the ſaints;
Ev'n if ſhe could, her love ſhe would repent,
But, ſince ſhe cannot, dreads the puniſhment:
Her forfeit faith, and Paſimond betray'd,
Are ever preſent, and her crime upbraid.
She blames herſelf, nor blames her lover leſs,
Augments her anger, as her fears increaſe:
From her own back the burden would remove,
And lays the load on his ungovern'd love,
Which interpoſing durſt, in heaven's deſpite,
Invade, and violate another's right:
The powers incens'd a while deferr'd his pain,
And made him maſter of his vows in vain:
But ſoon they puniſh'd his preſumptuous pride;
That for his daring enterprize ſhe dy'd;
Who rather not reſiſted, than comply'd.
Then, impotent of mind, with alter'd ſenſe,
She hugg'd th' offender, and forgave th' offence,
Sex to the laſt: mean time with ſails declin'd
The wandering veſſel drove before the wind:
Toſs'd and retoſs'd, aloft, and then below,
Nor port they ſeek, nor certain courſe they know,
But every moment wait the coming blow.
Thus blindly driven, by breaking day they view'd
The land before them, and their fears renew'd;

The

The land was welcome, but the tempeſt bore
The threaten'd ſhip againſt a rocky ſhore.
A winding bay was near; to this they bent,
And juſt eſcap'd; their force already ſpent:
Secure from ſtorms, and panting from the ſea,
The land unknown at leiſure they ſurvey;
And ſaw (but ſoon their fickly ſight withdrew)
The riſing towers of Rhodes at diſtant view;
And curs'd the hoſtile ſhore of Paſimond,
Sav'd from the ſeas, and ſhipwreck'd on the ground.
The frighted ſailors try'd their ſtrength in vain
To turn the ſtern, and tempt the ſtormy main;
But the ſtiff wind withſtood the labouring oar,
And forc'd them forward on the fatal ſhore!
The crooked keel now bites the Rhodian ſtrand,
And the ſhip moor'd conſtrains the crew to land:
Yet ſtill they might be ſafe, becauſe unknown,
But, as ill fortune ſeldom comes alone,
The veſſel they diſmiſs'd was driven before,
Already ſhelter'd on their native ſhore;
Known each, they know; but each with change of chear;
The vanquiſh'd ſide exults; the victors fear;
Not them but theirs, made priſoners ere they fight,
Deſpairing conqueſt, and depriv'd of flight.
The country rings around with loud alarms,
And raw in fields the rude militia ſwarms;
Mouths without hands; maintain'd at vaſt expence,
In peace a charge, in war a weak defence:
Stout once a month they march, a bluſtering band,
And ever, but in times of need, at hand;

This

This was the morn when, iſſuing on the guard,
Drawn up in rank and file they ſtood prepar'd
Of ſeeming arms to make a ſhort eſſay,
Then haſten to be drunk, the buſineſs of the day.
The cowards would have fled, but that they knew
Themſelves ſo many, and their foes ſo few:
But, crowding on, the laſt the firſt impel:
Till overborn with weight the Cyprians fell.
Cymon inſlav'd, who firſt the war begun,
And Iphigene once more is loſt and won.
Deep in a dungeon was the captive caſt,
Depriv'd of day, and held in fetters faſt:
His life was only ſpar'd at their requeſt,
Whom taken he ſo nobly had releas'd:
But Iphigenia was the ladies care,
Each in their turn addreſs'd to treat the fair;
While Paſimond and his the nuptial feaſt prepare.
Her ſecret ſoul to Cymon was inclin'd,
But ſhe muſt ſuffer what her fates aſſign'd;
So paſſive is the church of woman-kind.
What worſe to Cymon could his fortune deal,
Roll'd to the loweſt ſpoke of all her wheel?
It reſted to diſmiſs the downward weight,
Or raiſe him upward to his former height;
The latter pleas'd; and love (concern'd the moſt)
Prepar'd th' amends, for what by love he loſt.
The ſire of Paſimond had left a ſon,
Though younger, yet for courage early known,
Ormiſda call'd, to whom by promiſe ty'd,
A Rhodian beauty was the deſtin'd bride;

Caſſandra

Caſſandra was her name, above the reſt
Renown'd for birth, with fortune amply bleſs'd.
Lyſimachus, who rul'd the Rhodian ſtate,
Was then by choice their annual magiſtrate:
He lov'd Caſſandra too with equal fire,
But fortune had not favour'd his deſire;
Croſs'd by her friends, by her not diſapprov'd,
Nor yet preferr'd, or like Ormiſda lov'd:
So ſtood th' affair: ſome little hope remain'd,
That, ſhould his rival chance to loſe, he gain'd.
Mean time young Paſimond his marriage preſs'd,
Ordain'd the nuptial day, prepar'd the feaſt;
And frugally reſolv'd (the charge to ſhun,
Which would be double ſhould he wed alone)
To join his brother's bridal with his own.
Lyſimachus, oppreſs'd with mortal grief,
Receiv'd the news, and ſtudy'd quick relief:
The fatal day approach'd; if force were us'd,
The magiſtrate his public truſt abus'd;
To juſtice liable, as law requir'd;
For, when his office ceas'd, his power expir'd:
While power remain'd, the means were in his hand:
By force to ſeize, and then forſake the land:
Betwixt extremes he knew not how to move,
A ſlave to fame, but, more a ſlave to love:
Reſtraining others, yet himſelf not free,
Made impotent by power, debas'd by dignity.
Both ſides he weigh'd: but, after much debate,
The man prevail'd above the magiſtrate.

Love

Love never fails to maſter what he finds,
But works a different way in different minds,
The fool enlightens, and the wiſe he blinds.
This youth propoſing to poſſeſs and ſcape,
Began in murder, to conclude in rape:
Unprais'd by me, though heaven ſometimes may bleſs
An impious act with undeſerv'd ſucceſs:
The great it ſeems are privileg'd alone
To puniſh all injuſtice but their own.
But here I ſtop, not daring to proceed,
Yet bluſh to flatter an unrighteous deed:
For crimes are but permitted, not decreed.

Reſolv'd on force, his wit the prætor bent,
To find the means that might ſecure th' event;
Nor long he labour'd, for his lucky thought
In captive Cymon found the friend he ſought;
Th' example pleas'd: the cauſe and crime the ſame;
An injur'd lover, and a raviſh'd dame.
How much he durſt he knew by what he dar'd,
The leſs he had to loſe, the leſs he car'd,
To manage loathſome life when love was the reward.

This ponder'd well, and fix'd on his intent,
In depth of night he for the priſoner ſent;
In ſecret ſent, the public view to ſhun,
Then with a ſober ſmile he thus begun.
The powers above, who bounteouſly beſtow
Their gifts and graces on mankind below,
Yet prove our merit firſt, nor blindly give
To ſuch as are not worthy to receive:

For

For valour and for virtue they provide
Their due reward, but firſt they muſt be try'd:
Theſe fruitful ſeeds within your mind they ſow'd;
'Twas yours t' improve the talent they beſtow'd:
They gave you to be born of noble kind,
They gave you love to lighten up your mind,
And purge the groſſer parts; they gave you care
To pleaſe, and courage to deſerve the fair.
Thus far they try'd you, and by proof they found
The grain intruſted in a grateful ground:
But ſtill the great experiment remain'd,
They ſuffer'd you to loſe the prize you gain'd;
That you might learn the gift was theirs alone:
And when reſtor'd, to them the bleſſing own.
Reſtor'd it ſoon will be; the means prepar'd,
The difficulty ſmooth'd, the danger ſhar'd:
Be but yourſelf, the care to me reſign,
Then Iphigene is yours, Caſſandra mine.
Your rival Paſimond purſues your life,
Impatient to revenge his raviſh'd wife,
But yet not his; to-morrow is behind,
And love our fortunes in one band has join'd:
Two brothers are our foes, Ormiſda mine,
As much declar'd as Paſimond is thine:
To-morrow muſt their common vows be ty'd:
With love to friend, and fortune for our guide,
Let both reſolve to die, or each redeem a bride.
Right I have none, nor haſt thou much to plead;
'Tis force, when done, muſt juſtify the deed:

Our taſk perform'd, we next prepare for flight:
And let the lovers talk in vain of right:
We with the fair will ſail before the wind,
If they are griev'd, I leave the laws behind.
Speak thy reſolves: if now thy courage droop,
Deſpair in priſon, and abandon hope:
But if thou dar'ſt in arms thy love regain
(For liberty without thy love were vain);
Then ſecond my deſign to ſeize the prey,
Or lead to ſecond rape, for well thou know'ſt the way.
Said Cymon overjoy'd, do thou propoſe
The means to fight, and only ſhew the foes:
For from the firſt, when love had fir'd my mind,
Reſolv'd I left the care of life behind.
To this the bold Lyſimachus reply'd,
Let heaven be neuter, and the ſword decide;
The eſpouſals are prepar'd, already play
The minſtrels, and provoke the tardy day:
By this the brides are wak'd, their grooms are dreſs'd;
All Rhodes is ſummon'd to the nuptial feaſt,
All but myſelf the ſole unbidden gueſt.
Unbidden though I am, I will be there,
And join'd by thee, intend to joy the fair.
Now hear the reſt; when day reſigns the light,
And chearful torches gild the jolly night,
Be ready at my call; my choſen few
With arms adminiſter'd ſhall aid thy crew.
Then entering unexpected will we ſeize
Our deſtin'd prey, from men diſſolv'd in eaſe;

By

By wine diſarm'd, unprepar'd for fight:
And haſtening to the ſeas, ſuborn our flight:
The ſeas are ours, for I command the fort;
A ſhip well-man'd expects us in the port:
If they, or if their friends, the prize conteſt,
Death ſhall attend the man who dares reſiſt.
It pleas'd! the priſoner to his hold retir'd,
His troop with equal emulation fir'd,
All fix'd to fight, and all their wonted work requir'd.
The ſun aroſe; the ſtreets were throng'd around,
The palace open'd; and the poſts were crown'd.
The double bridegroom at the door attends
Th' expected ſpouſe, and entertains the friends:
They meet, they lead to church, the prieſts invoke
The powers, and feed the flames with fragrant ſmoke.
This done, they feaſt, and at the cloſe of night
By kindled torches vary their delight,
Theſe lead the lively dance, and thoſe the brimming bowls invite.
Now, at th' appointed place and hour aſſign'd
With ſouls reſolv'd the raviſhers were join'd:
Three bands are form'd; the firſt is ſent before
To favour the retreat, and guard the ſhore;
The ſecond at the palace-gate is plac'd,
And up the lofty ſtairs aſcend the laſt:
A peaceful troop they ſeem with ſhining veſts,
But coats of mail beneath ſecure their breaſts.
Dauntleſs they enter, Cymon at their head,
And find the feaſt renew'd, the table ſpread:

The kindred of the ſlain forgive the deed,
But a ſhort exile muſt for ſhow precede:
The term expir'd, from Candia they remove;
And happy each, at home, enjoys his love.

TRANS-

TRANSLATIONS

FROM

OVID's METAMORPHOSES.

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

LORD RADCLIFFE.

MY LORD,

THESE Miscellany Poems * are by many titles yours. The first they claim from your acceptance of my promise to present them to you, before some of them were yet in being. The rest are derived from your own merit, the exactness of your judgment in poetry, and the candour of your nature; easy to forgive some trivial faults when they come accompanied with countervailing beauties. But, after all, though these are your equitable claims to a dedication from other Poets, yet I must acknowledge a bribe in the case, which is your particular liking to my verses. It is a vanity common to all writers, to over-value their own productions; and it is better for me to own this failing in myself, than the world to do it for me. For what other reason have I spent my life in so unprofitable a study? why am I grown old in seeking so barren a reward as fame? The same parts and application, which have made me a poet, might have raised me to any honours of the gown, which are often given to men of as little learning and less honesty than myself. No government has ever been, or ever can be, wherein time-servers and blockheads will not be uppermost. The

* Prefixed to the Third Volume of Dryden's Miscellany Poems, printed in 1693.

The perſons are only changed, but the ſame jugglings in ſtate, the ſame hypocriſy in religion, the ſame ſelf-intereſt, and miſmanagement, will remain for ever. Blood and money will be laviſhed in all ages, only for the preferment of new faces, with old conſciences. There is too often a jaundice in the eyes of great men; they ſee not thoſe whom they raiſe in the ſame colours with other men. All whom they affect, look golden to them; when the gilding is only in their own diſtempered ſight. Theſe conſiderations have given me a kind of contempt for thoſe who have riſen by unworthy ways. I am not aſhamed to be little, when I ſee them ſo infamouſly great; neither do I know why the name of poet ſhould be diſhonourable to me if I am truly one, as I hope I am; for I will never do any thing that ſhall diſhonour it. The notions of morality are known to all men: none can pretend ignorance of thoſe ideas which are in-born in mankind: and if I ſee one thing, and practiſe the contrary, I muſt be diſingenuous, not to acknowledge a clear truth, and baſe to act againſt the light of my own conſcience. For the reputation of my honeſty, no man can queſtion it, who has any of his own: for that of my poetry, it ſhall either ſtand by its own merit; or fall for want of it. Ill writers are uſually the ſharpeſt cenſors: for they (as the beſt poet and the beſt patron ſaid) when in the full perfection of decay, turn vinegar, and come again in play. Thus the corruption of a poet is the generation of a critick: I mean of a critick in the general acceptation of this age; for formerly they were quite another ſpecies

ſpecies of men. They were defenders of poets, and commentators on their works; to illuſtrate obſcure beauties; to place ſome paſſages in a better light; to redeem others from malicious interpretations; to help out an author's modeſty, who is not oſtentatious of his wit; and, in ſhort, to ſhield him from the ill-nature of thoſe fellows, who were then called Zoili and Momi, and now take upon themſelves the venerable name of cenſors. But neither Zoilus, nor he who endeavoured to defame Virgil, were ever adopted into the name of criticks by the ancients: what their reputation was then, we know; and their ſucceſſors in this age deſerve no better. Are our auxiliary forces turned our enemies? are they, who at beſt are but wits of the ſecond order, and whoſe only credit amongſt readers is what they obtained by being ſubſervient to the fame of writers, are theſe become rebels of ſlaves, and uſurpers of ſubjects; or, to ſpeak in the moſt honourable terms of them, are they from our ſeconds become principals againſt us? does the ivy undermine the oak, which ſupports its weakneſs? what labour would it coſt them to put in a better line, than the worſt of thoſe which they expunge in a true poet? Petronius, the greateſt wit perhaps of all the Romans, yet when his envy prevailed upon his judgment to fall on Lucan, he fell himſelf in his attempt: he performed worſe in his Eſſay of the Civil War, than the author of the Pharſalia: and avoiding his errors, has made greater of his own. Julius Scaliger would needs turn down Homer, and abdicate him after the poſſeſſion of three thouſand

years:

years: has he ſucceeded in his attempt? he has indeed ſhown us ſome of thoſe imperfections in him, which are incident to human kind: but who had not rather be that Homer than this Scaliger? You ſee the ſame hypercritick, when he endeavours to mend the beginning of Claudian (a faulty poet and living in a barbarous age) yet how ſhort he comes of him, and ſubſtitutes ſuch verſes of his own as deſerve the ferula. What a cenſure has he made of Lucan, that he rather ſeems to bark than ſing? would any but a dog, have made ſo ſnarling a compariſon? one would have thought he had learned Latin, as late as they tell us he did Greek. Yet he came off, with a *pace tuâ*, by your good leave, Lucan; he called him not by thoſe outrageous names, of fool, booby, and blockhead: he had ſomewhat more of good-manners than his ſucceſſors, as he had much more knowledge. We have two ſorts of thoſe gentlemen in our nation: ſome of them proceeding with a ſeeming moderation and pretence of reſpect, to the dramatick writers of the laſt age, only ſcorn and vilify the preſent poets, to ſet up their predeceſſors. But this is only in appearance; for their real deſign is nothing leſs than to do honour to any man, beſides themſelves. Horace took notice of ſuch men in his age: "Non invidet genius favet ille, ſepultis; noſtra ſed impugnat; nos noſtraque lividus odit." It is not with an ultimate intention to pay reverence to the manes of Shakeſpeare, Fletcher, and Ben Jonſon, that they commend their writings, but to throw dirt on the writers of this age. their declaration is one thing, and their practice is another.

ther. By a ſeeming veneration to our fathers, they would thruſt out us their lawful iſſue, and govern us themſelves, under a ſpecious pretence of reformation. If they could compaſs their intent, what would wit and learning get by ſuch a change? if we are bad poets, they are worſe; and when any of their woeful pieces come abroad, the difference is ſo great betwixt them and good writers, that there need no criticiſms on our part to decide it. When they deſcribe the writers of this age, they draw ſuch monſtrous figures of them, as reſemble none of us: our pretended pictures are ſo unlike, that it is evident we never ſate to them: they are all groteſque; the products of their wild imaginations, things out of nature, ſo far from being copied from us, that they reſemble nothing that ever was, or ever can be. But there is another ſort of inſects, more venomous than the former. Thoſe who manifeſtly aim at the deſtruction of our poetical church and ſtate; who allow nothing to their country-men, either of this or of the former age. Theſe attack the living by raking up the aſhes of the dead; well knowing that if they can ſubvert their original title to the ſtage, we who claim under them muſt fall of courſe. Peace be to the venerable ſhades of Shakeſpeare and Ben Jonſon: none of the living will preſume to have any competition with them: as they were our predeceſſors, ſo they were our maſters. We trail our plays under them; but (as at the funerals of a Turkiſh emperor) our enſigns are furled or dragged upon the ground, in honour to the dead; ſo we may lawfully advance our own, afterwards,

wards, to ſhow that we ſucceed: if leſs in dignity, yet on the ſame foot and title, which we think too we can maintain againſt the inſolence of our own janizaries. If I am the man, as I have reaſon to believe, who am ſeemingly courted, and ſecretly undermined; I think I ſhall be able to defend myſelf, when I am openly attacked. And to ſhew beſides that the Greek writers only gave us the rudiments of a ſtage which they never finiſhed: that many of the tragedies in the former age amongſt us, were without compariſon beyond thoſe of Sophocles and Euripides. But, at preſent, I have neither the leiſure nor the means for ſuch an undertaking. It is ill going to law for an eſtate, with him who is in poſſeſſion of it, and enjoys the preſent profits, to feed his cauſe. But the "quantum mutatus" may be remembered in due time. In the mean while, I leave the world to judge, who gave the provocation.

This, my Lord, is, I confeſs, a long digreſſion from Miſcellany Poems to Modern Tragedies: but I have the ordinary excuſe of an injured man, who will be telling his tale unſeaſonably to his betters; though, at the ſame time, I am certain, you are ſo good a friend, as to take a concern in all things which belong to one who ſo truly honours you. And beſides, being yourſelf a critick of the genuine ſort, who have read the beſt authors in their own languages, who perfectly diſtinguiſh of their ſeveral merits, and in general prefer them to the moderns; yet, I know, you judge for the Engliſh tragedies, againſt the Greek and Latin, as well as againſt the French, Italian, and Spaniſh, of theſe latter ages.

ages. Indeed there is a vaſt difference betwixt arguing like Perault in behalf of the French poets, againſt Homer and Virgil, and betwixt giving the Engliſh poets their undoubted due of excelling Æſchylus, Euripides, and Sophocles. For if we, or our greater fathers, have not yet brought the drama to an abſolute perfection, yet at leaſt we have carried it much farther than thoſe ancient Greeks; who, beginning from a Chorus, could never totally exclude it, as we have done; who find it an unprofitable incumbrance, without any neceſſity of entertaining it amongſt us; and without the poſſibility of eſtabliſhing it here, unleſs it were ſupported by a publick charge. Neither can we accept of thoſe lay-biſhops, as ſome call them, who, under pretence of reforming the ſtage, would intrude themſelves upon us as our ſeperiors, being indeed incompetent judges of what is manners, what religion, and leaſt of all, what is poetry and good ſenſe. I can tell them in behalf of all my fellows, that when they come to exerciſe a juriſdiction over us, they ſhall have the ſtage to themſelves, as they have the laurel. As little can I grant, that the French dramatick writers excel the Engliſh: our authors as far ſurpaſs them in genius, as our ſoldiers excel theirs in courage: it is true, in conduct they ſurpaſs us either way; yet that proceeds not ſo much from their greater knowledge, as from the difference of taſtes in the two nations. They content themſelves with a thin deſign, without epiſodes, and managed by few perſons. Our audience will not be pleaſed but with variety of accidents, an underplot, and many

actors. They follow the ancients too ſervilley, in the machanick rules, and we aſſume too much licence to ourſelves, in keeping them only in view, at too great a diſtance. But if our audience had their taſtes, our poets could more eaſily comply with them, than the French writers could come up to the ſublimity of our thoughts, or to the difficult variety of our deſigns. However it be, I dare eſtabliſh it for a rule of practice on the ſtage, that we are bound to pleaſe thoſe whom we pretend to entertain; and that at any price, religion and good-manners only excepted; and I care not much, if I give this handle to our bad illiterate poetaſters, for the defence of their SCRIPTIONS, as they call them. There is a ſort of merit in delighting the ſpectators; which is a name more proper for them, than that of auditors: or elſe Horace is in the wrong, when he commends Lucilius for it. But theſe common-places I mean to treat at greater leiſure: in the mean time, ſubmitting that little I have ſaid, to your Lordſhip's approbation, or your cenſure, and chuſing rather to entertain you this way, as you are a judge of writing, than to oppreſs your modeſty with other commendations; which, though they are your due, yet would not be equally received in this ſatirical and cenſorious age. That which cannot without injury be denied to you, is the eaſineſs of your converſation, far from affectation or pride: not denying even to enemies their juſt praiſes. And this, if I would dwell on any theme of this nature, is no vulgar commendation to your Lordſhip. Without flattery, my Lord, you have it in

your nature, to be a patron and encourager of good poets, but your fortune has not yet put into your hands the opportunity of expreſſing it. What you will be hereafter, may be more than gueſſed, by what you are at preſent. You maintain the character of a nobleman, without that haughtineſs which generally attends too many of the nobility; and when you converſe with gentlemen, you forget not that you have been of their order. You are married to the daughter of a king, who, amongſt her other high perfections, has derived from him a charming behaviour, a winning goodneſs, and a majeſtic perſon. The Muſes and the Graces are the ornaments of your family; while the Muſe ſings, the Grace accompanies her voice: even the ſervants of the Muſes have ſometimes had the happineſs to hear her; and to receive their inſpirations from her.

I will not give myſelf the liberty of going farther; for it is ſo ſweet to wander in a pleaſing way, that I ſhould never arrive at my journey's end. To keep myſelf from being belated in my letter, and tiring your attention, I muſt return to the place where I was ſetting out. I humbly dedicate to your Lordſhip, my own labours in this Miſcellany: at the ſame time, not arrogating to myſelf the privilege of inſcribing to you, the works of others who are joined with me in this undertaking, over which I can pretend no right. Your lady and you have done me the favour to hear me read my tranſlations of Ovid; and you both ſeemed not to be diſpleaſed with them. Whether it be the partiality of an old man to his youngeſt child, I know not: but

they appear to me the beſt of all my endeavours in this kind. Perhaps this poet is more eaſy to be tranſlated than ſome others, whom I have lately attempted: perhaps too, he was more according to my genius. He is certainly more palatable to the reader, than any of the Roman wits; though ſome of them are more lofty, ſome more inſtructive, and others more correct. He had learning enough to make him equal to the beſt. But as his verſe came eaſily, he wanted the toil of application to amend it. He is often luxuriant both in his fancy and expreſſions, and, as it has lately been obſerved, not always natural. If wit be pleaſantry, he has it to exceſs; but if it be propriety, Lucretius, Horace, and above all, Virgil, are his ſuperiors. I have ſaid ſo much of him already, in my preface to his Heroical epiſtles, that there remains little to be added in this place: for my own part, I have endeavoured to copy his character what I could in this tranſlation, even perhaps farther than I ſhould have done; to his very faults. Mr. Chapman, in his tranſlation of Homer, profeſſes to have done it ſomewhat paraphraſtically, and that on ſet purpoſe; his opinion being, that a good poet is to be tranſlated in that manner. I remember not the reaſon which he gives for it: but I ſuppoſe it is, for fear of omitting any of his excellencies: ſure I am, that if it be a fault, it is much more pardonable than that of thoſe, who run into the other extreme of a literal and cloſe tranſlation, where the poet is confined ſo ſtreightly to his author's words, that he wants elbow-room to expreſs his elegancies. He leaves him obſcure;

he leaves him proſe, where he found him verſe: and no better than thus has Ovid been ſerved by the ſo much admired Sandys. This is at leaſt the idea which I have remaining of his tranſlation; for I never read him ſince I was a boy. They who take him upon content, from the praiſes which their fathers gave him, may inform their judgment by reading him again, and ſee (if they underſtand the original) what is become of Ovid's poetry, in his verſion; whether it be not all, or the greateſt part of it, evaporated: but this proceeded from the wrong judgment of the age in which he lived. They neither knew good verſe, nor loved it; they were ſcholars, it is true, but they were pedants. And for a juſt reward of their pedantic pains, all their tranſlations want to be tranſlated into Engliſh.

If I flatter not myſelf, or if my friends have not flattered me, I have given my author's ſenſe, for the moſt part, truly: for to miſtake ſometimes, is incident to all men; and not to follow the Dutch commentators always, may be forgiven to a man who thinks them, in the general, heavy groſs-witted fellows, fit only to gloſs on their own dull poets. But I leave a farther ſatire on their wit, till I have a better opportunity to ſhew how much I love and honour them. I have likewiſe attempted to reſtore Ovid to his native ſweetneſs, eaſineſs, and ſmoothneſs; and to give my poetry a kind of cadence, and, as we call it, a run of verſe, as like the original, as the Engliſh can come up to the Latin. As he ſeldom uſes any Synalephas, ſo I have endeavoured to avoid them, as often as I could: I have likewiſe given

him his own turns, both on the words and on the thought, which I cannot ſay are inimitable, becauſe I have copied them; and ſo may others, if they uſe the ſame diligence: but certainly they are wonderfully graceful in this poet. Since I have named the Synalepha, which is the cutting off one vowel immediately before another, I will give an example of it from Chapman's Homer, which lies before me; for the benefit of thoſe who underſtand not the Latin Proſodia. It is in the firſt line of the argument to the firſt Iliad.

Apollo's prieſt to th' Argive fleet doth bring, &c.

There we ſee he makes it not the Argive, but th' Argive, to ſhun the ſhock of the two vowels, immediately following each other; but, in his ſecond argument, in the ſame page, he gives a bad example of the quite contrary kind:

Alpha the prayer of Chryſes ſings;
The army's plague, the ſtrife of kings.

In theſe words *the army's*, *the* ending with a vowel, and *army's* beginning with another vowel, without cutting off the firſt, which by it had been *th' army's*, there remains a moſt horrible ill-ſounding gap betwixt thoſe words. I cannot ſay that I have every way obſerved the rule of the Synalepha in my tranſlation; but whereſoever I have not, it is a fault in ſound: the French and the Italians have made it an inviolable precept in their verſification; therein following the ſevere example of the Latin poet. Our countrymen have not yet reformed their poetry ſo far, but content themſelves with

following the licentious practice of the Greeks; who, though they ſometimes uſe Synalephas, yet make no difficulty, very often, to ſound one vowel upon another; as Homer does, in the very firſt line of Alpha. Μῆνιν ἄειδε θεὰ Πηληϊάδεω Ἀχιλῆος. It is true, indeed, that in the ſecond line, in theſe words μυρὶ Ἀχαιοῖς, and ἄλγε' ἔθηκεν. the Synalepha in revenge is twice obſerved. But it becomes us, for the ſake of Euphony, rather "Muſas colere ſeveriores," with the Romans, than to give into the looſeneſs of the Grecians.

I have tired myſelf, and have been ſummoned by the preſs to ſend away this Dedication, otherwiſe I had expoſed ſome other faults, which are daily committed by our Engliſh poets; which, with care and obſervation, might be amended. For, after all, our language is both copious, ſignificant, and majeſtical, and might be reduced into a more harmonious ſound. But, for want of public encouragement, in this iron age, we are ſo far from making any progreſs in the improvement of our tongue, that in few years we ſhall ſpeak and write as barbarouſly as our neighbours.

Notwithſtanding my haſte, I cannot forbear to tell your Lordſhip, that there are two fragments of Homer tranſlated in this Miſcellany; one by Mr. Congreve (whom I cannot mention without the honour which is due to his excellent parts, and that entire affection which I bear him) and the other by myſelf. Both the ſubjects are pathetical, and I am ſure my friend has added to the tenderneſs which he found in the original, and, without flattery, ſurpaſſed his author. Yet I muſt

needs ſay this in reference to Homer, that he is much more capable of exciting the manly paſſions than thoſe of grief and pity. To cauſe admiration, is indeed the proper and adequate deſign of an epic poem: and in that he has excelled even Virgil; yet, without preſuming to arraign our maſter, I may venture to affirm, that he is ſomewhat too talkative, and more than ſomewhat too digreſſive. This is ſo manifeſt, that it cannot be denied in that little parcel which I have tranſlated, perhaps too literally: there Andromache, in the midſt of her concernment, and fright for Hector, runs off her biaſs, to tell him a ſtory of her pedigree, and of the lamentable death of her father, her mother, and her ſeven brothers. The devil was in Hector if he knew not all this matter, as well as ſhe who told it him; for ſhe had been his bedfellow for many years together: and if he knew it, then it muſt be confeſſed, that Homer, in this long digreſſion, has rather given her his own character, than that of the fair lady whom he paints. His dear friends the commentators, who never fail him at a pinch, will needs excuſe him, by making the preſent ſorrow of Andromache, to occaſion the remembrance of all the paſt: but others think that ſhe had enough to do with that grief which now oppreſſed her, without running for aſſiſtance to her family. Virgil, I am confident, would have omitted ſuch a work of ſupererogation. But Virgil had the gift of expreſſing much in little, and ſometimes in ſilence: for though he yielded much to Homer in invention, he more excelled him in his admirable judgment. He drew the paſſion of Dido

for

for Æneas, in the moſt lively and moſt natural colours imaginable: Homer was ambitious enough of moving pity; for he has attempted twice on the ſame ſubject of Hector's death: firſt, when Priam and Hecuba beheld his corpſe, which was dragged after the chariot of Achilles; and then in the lamentation which was made over him, when his body was redeemed by Priam; and the ſame perſons again bewailed his death, with a chorus of others to help the cry. But if this laſt excite compaſſion in you, as I doubt not but it will, you are more obliged to the tranſlator than the poet: for Homer, as I obſerved before, can move rage better than he can pity: he ſtirs up the iraſcible appetite, as our philoſophers call it; he provokes to murther, and the deſtruction of God's images; he forms and equips thoſe ungodly man-killers, whom we poets, when we flatter them, call heroes; a race of men, who can never enjoy quiet in themſelves, till they have taken it from all the world. This is Homer's commendation; and ſuch as it is, the lovers of peace, or at leaſt of more moderate heroiſm, will never envy him. But let Homer and Virgil contend for the prize of honour betwixt themſelves; I am ſatisfied they will never have a third concurrent. I wiſh Mr. Congreve had the leiſure to tranſlate him, and the world the good-nature and juſtice to encourage him in that noble deſign, of which he is more capable than any man I know. The earl of Mulgrave and Mr. Waller, two the beſt judges of our age, have aſſured me, that they could never read over the tranſlation of Chapman, without incredible pleaſure

and extreme tranſport. This admiration of theirs muſt needs proceed from the author himſelf: for the tranſlator has thrown him down as low as harſh numbers, improper Engliſh, and a monſtrous length of verſe, could carry him. What then would he appear in the harmonious verſion of one of the beſt writers, living in a much better age than was the laſt? I mean for verſification, and the art of numbers: for in the drama we have not arrived to the pitch of Shakeſpeare and Ben Jonſon. But here, my Lord, I am forced to break off abruptly, without endeavouring at a compliment in the cloſe. This Miſcellany is, without diſpute, one of the beſt of the kind, which has hitherto been extant in our tongue. At leaſt, as Sir Samuel Tuke has ſaid before me, a modeſt man may praiſe what is not his own. My fellows have no need of any protection: but I humbly recommend my part of it, as much as it deſerves, to your patronage and acceptance, and all the reſt to your forgiveneſs. I am,

My LORD,

Your Lordſhip's moſt

Obedient Servant,

JOHN DRYDEN.

THE

THE FIRST BOOK OF OVID'S METAMORPHOSES.

OF bodies chang'd to various forms I ſing:
Ye Gods, from whence theſe miracles did ſpring,
Inſpire my numbers with celeſtial heat;
Till I my long laborious work compleat;
And add perpetual tenor to my rhymes,
Deduc'd from nature's birth, to Cæſar's times.
Before the ſeas, and this terreſtrial ball,
And heaven's high canopy, that covers all,
One was the face of nature, if a face;
Rather a rude and indigeſted maſs:
A lifeleſs lump, unfaſhion'd, and unfram'd,
Of jarring ſeeds, and juſtly Chaos nam'd.
No ſun was lighted up the world to view;
No moon did yet her blunted horns renew:
Nor yet was earth ſuſpended in the ſky;
Nor, pois'd, did on her own foundations lie:
Nor ſeas about the ſhores their arms had thrown;
But earth, and air, and water, were in one.
Thus air was void of light, and earth unſtable,
And water's dark abyſs unnavigable.

No

No certain form on any was impreſt;
All were confus'd, and each diſturb'd the reſt.
For hot and cold were in one body fixt,
And ſoft with hard, and light with heavy mixt.
But God, or Nature, while they thus contend,
To theſe inteſtine diſcords put an end.
Then earth from air, and ſeas from earth were driven,
And groſſer air ſunk from ætherial heaven.
Thus diſembroil'd, they take their proper place;
The next of kin contiguouſly embrace;
And foes are ſunder'd by a larger ſpace.
The force of fire aſcended firſt on high,
And took its dwelling in the vaulted ſky.
Then air ſucceeds, in lightneſs next to fire;
Whoſe atoms from unactive earth retire.
Earth ſinks beneath, and draws a numerous throng
Of ponderous, thick, unwieldy ſeeds along.
About her coaſts unruly waters roar,
And, riſing on a ridge, inſult the ſhore.
Thus when the God, whatever God was he,
Had form'd the whole, and made the parts agree,
That no unequal portions might be found,
He moulded earth into a ſpacious round:
Then, with a breath, he gave the winds to blow;
And bade the congregated waters flow.
He adds the running ſprings, and ſtanding lakes;
And bounding banks for winding rivers makes.
Some part in earth are ſwallow'd up, the moſt
In ample oceans, diſembogued, are loſt.

He

He ſhades the woods, the vallies he reſtrains
With rocky mountains, and extends the plains.
And as five zones th' ætherial regions bind,
Five, correſpondent, are to earth aſſign'd:
The ſun with rays, directly darting down,
Fires all beneath, and fries the middle zone:
The two beneath the diſtant poles complain
Of endleſs winter, and perpetual rain.
Betwixt th' extremes, two happier climates hold
The temper that partakes of hot and cold.
The fields of liquid air, incloſing all,
Surround the compaſs of this earthly ball:
The lighter parts lie next the fires above;
The groſſer near the watery ſurface move:
Thick clouds are ſpread, and ſtorms engender there,
And thunder's voice, which wretched mortals fear,
And winds that on their wings cold winter bear.
Nor were thoſe bluſtering brethren left at large,
On ſeas and ſhores their fury to diſcharge:
Bound as they are, and circumſcrib'd in place,
They rend the world, reſiſtleſs, where they paſs;
And mighty marks of miſchief leave behind;
Such is the rage of their tempeſtuous kind.
Firſt Eurus to the riſing morn is ſent,
(The regions of the balmy continent)
And Eaſtern realms, where early Perſians run,
To greet the bleſt appearance of the ſun.
Weſtward the wanton Zephyr wings his flight,
Pleas'd with the remnants of departing light:

Fierce

Fierce Boreas with his offspring iſſues forth,
T' invade the frozen waggon of the North.
While frowning Auſter ſeeks the ſouthern ſphere,
And rots, with endleſs rain, th' unwholſome year.
High o'er the clouds, and empty realms of wind,
The God a clearer ſpace for heaven deſign'd;
Where fields of light and liquid æther flow,
Purg'd from the ponderous dregs of earth below.
Scarce had the power diſtinguiſh'd theſe, when ſtraight
The ſtars, no longer overlaid with weight,
Exert their heads from underneath the maſs,
And upward ſhoot, and kindle as they paſs,
And with diffuſive light adorn the heavenly place.
Then, every void of nature to ſupply,
With forms of Gods he fills the vacant ſky:
New herds of beaſts he ſends, the plains to ſhare;
New colonies of birds, to people air;
And to their oozy beds the finny fiſh repair.
A creature of a more exalted kind
Was wanting yet, and then was man deſign'd:
Conſcious of thought, of more capacious breaſt,
For empire form'd, and fit to rule the reſt:
Whether with particles of heavenly fire
The God of nature did his ſoul inſpire;
Or earth, but new divided from the ſky,
And pliant ſtill, retain'd th' ætherial energy:
Which wiſe Prometheus temper'd into paſte,
And, mixt with living ſtreams, the godlike image caſt.
Thus, while the mute creation downward bend
Their ſight, and to their earthly mother tend,

Man-

Man looks aloft, and with erected eyes
Beholds his own hereditary ſkies.
From ſuch rude principles our form began,
And earth was metamorphos'd into man.

THE GOLDEN AGE.

The golden age was firſt; when man, yet new,
No rule but uncorrupted reaſon knew;
And, with a native bent, did good purſue.
Unforc'd by puniſhment, unaw'd by fear,
His words were ſimple, and his ſoul ſincere:
Needleſs was written-law, where none oppreſt;
The law of man was written in his breaſt:
No ſuppliant crowds before the judge appear'd;
No court erected yet, nor cauſe was heard;
But all was ſafe, for conſcience was their guard.
The mountain-trees in diſtant proſpect pleaſe,
Ere yet the pine deſcended to the ſeas;
Ere ſails were ſpread, new oceans to explore;
And happy mortals, unconcern'd for more,
Confin'd their wiſhes to their native-ſhore.
No walls were yet, nor fence, nor moat, nor mound;
Nor drum was heard, nor trumpet's angry ſound:
Nor ſwords were forg'd; but, void of care and crime,
The ſoft creation ſlept away their time.
The teeming earth, yet guiltleſs of the plough,
And unprovok'd, did fruitful ſtores allow:
Content with food, which nature freely bred,
On wildings and on ſtrawberries they fed;
Cornels and bramble-berries gave the reſt,
And falling acorns furniſh'd out a feaſt.

The

The flowers unſown in fields and meadows reign'd;
And weſtern winds immortal Spring maintain'd.
In following years the bearded corn enſued
From earth unaſk'd, nor was that earth renew'd,
From veins of vallies milk and nectar broke;
And honey ſweating through the pores of oak.

THE SILVER AGE.

But when good Saturn, baniſh'd from above,
Was driven to hell, the world was under Jove.
Succeeding times a ſilver age behold,
Excelling braſs, but more excell'd by gold.
Then Summer, Autumn, Winter, did appear;
And Spring was but a ſeaſon of the year.
The ſun his annual courſe obliquely made,
Good days contracted, and enlarg'd the bad.
Then air with ſultry heats began to glow;
The wings of winds were clog'd with ice and ſnow;
And ſhivering mortals, into houſes driven,
Sought ſhelter from th' inclemency of heaven.
Thoſe houſes, then, were caves, or homely ſheds,
With twining oziers fenc'd, and moſs their beds.
Then ploughs, for ſeed, the fruitful furrows broke,
And oxen labour'd firſt beneath the yoke.

THE BRAZEN AGE.

To this next came in courſe the brazen age,
A warlike offspring, prompt to bloody rage,
Not impious yet———

THE

THE IRON AGE.

——Hard ſteel ſucceeded then;
And ſtubborn as the metal were the men.
Truth, Modeſty, and Shame, the world forſook:
Fraud, Avarice, and Force, their places took.
Then ſails were ſpread to every wind that blew;
Raw were the ſailors, and the depths were new:
Trees rudely hollow'd, did the waves ſuſtain:
Ere ſhips in triumph plough'd the watery plain.
Then land-marks limited to each his right:
For all before was common as the light.
Nor was the ground alone requir'd to bear
Her annual income to the crooked ſhare;
But greedy mortals, rummaging her ſtore,
Digg'd from her entrails firſt the precious ore;
Which next to hell the prudent Gods had laid;
And that alluring ill to ſight diſplay'd;
Thus curſed ſteel, and more accurſed gold,
Gave miſchief birth, and made that miſchief bold:
And double death did wretched man invade,
By ſteel aſſaulted, and by gold betray'd.
Now (brandiſh'd weapons glittering in their hands)
Mankind is broken looſe from moral bands;
No rights of hoſpitality remain:
The gueſt, by him who harbour'd him, is ſlain:
The ſon-in-law purſues the father's life:
The wife her huſband murders, he the wife.
The ſtep-dame poiſon for the ſon prepares,
The ſon inquires into his father's years.

Faith

Faith flies, and Piety in exile mourns;
And Juſtice, here oppreſt, to heaven returns.

THE GIANTS WAR.

Nor were the Gods themſelves more ſafe above;
Againſt beleaguer'd heaven the giants move.
Hills pil'd on hills, on mountains mountains lie,
To make their mad approaches to the ſky.
Till Jove, no longer patient, took his time
T' avenge with thunder their audacious crime:
Red lightning play'd along the firmament,
And their demoliſh'd works to pieces rent.
Sing'd with the flames, and with the bolts transfix'd,
With native earth their blood the monſters mix'd;
The blood, indued with animating heat,
Did in th' impregnate earth new ſons beget:
They, like the ſeed from which they ſprung, accurſt,
Againſt the Gods immortal hatred nurſt:
An impious, arrogant, and cruel brood;
Expreſſing their original from blood.
Which when the king of Gods beheld from high
(Withal revolving in his memory,
What he himſelf had found on earth of late,
Lycaon's guilt, and his inhuman treat)
He ſigh'd, nor longer with his pity ſtrove;
But kindled to a wrath becoming Jove;
Then call'd a general council of the Gods;
Who, ſummon'd, iſſue from their bleſt abodes,
And fill th' aſſembly with a ſhining train,
A way there is, in heaven's expanded plain,

Which,

Which, when the ſkies are clear, is ſeen below,
And mortals by the name of milky know.
The ground-work is of ſtars; through which the road
Lies open to the thunderer's abode.
The Gods of greater nations dwell around,
And, on the right and left the palace bound;
The commons where they can; the nobler ſort,
With winding-doors wide open, front the court.
This place, as far as earth with heaven may vie,
I dare to call the Louvre of the ſky.
When all were plac'd, in ſeats diſtinctly known,
And he their father had aſſum'd the throne,
Upon his ivory ſceptre firſt he leant,
Then ſhook his head that ſhook the firmament:
Air, earth, and ſeas, obey'd th' almighty nod;
And, with a general fear, confeſs'd the God.
At length with indignation, thus he broke
His awful ſilence, and the powers beſpoke:
I was not more concern'd in that debate
Of empire, when our univerſal ſtate
Was put to hazard, and the giant race
Our captive ſkies were ready to embrace:
For, though the foe was fierce, the ſeeds of all
Rebellion ſprung from one original;
Now whereſoever ambient waters glide,
All are corrupt, and all muſt be deſtroy'd.
Let me this holy proteſtation make:
By hell and hell's inviolable lake,
I try'd whatever in the God-head lay,
But gangren'd members muſt be lopt away,
Before the nobler parts are tainted to decay.

There dwells below a race of Demi-gods,
Of nymphs in waters, and of fawns in woods:
Who, though not worthy yet in heaven to live,
Let them at leaſt enjoy that earth we give.
Can theſe be thought ſecurely lodg'd below,
When I myſelf, who no ſuperior know,
I, who have heaven and earth at my command,
Have been attempted by Lycaon's hand?

At this a murmur through the ſynod went,
And with one voice they vote his puniſhment.
Thus, when conſpiring traitors dar'd to doom
The fall of Cæſar, and in him of Rome,
The nations trembled with a pious fear;
All anxious for their earthly thunderer:
Nor was their care, O Cæſar, leſs eſteem'd
By thee, than that of heaven for Jove was deem'd:
Who with his hand, and voice, did firſt reſtrain
Their murmurs, then reſum'd his ſpeech again.
The Gods to ſilence were compos'd, and fate
With reverence due to his ſuperior ſtate.

Cancel your pious cares; already he
Has paid his debt to juſtice, and to me.
Yet what his crimes, and what my judgments were,
Remains for me thus briefly to declare.
The clamours of this vile degenerate age,
The cries of orphans, and th' oppreſſor's rage,
Had reach'd the ſtars; I will deſcend, ſaid I,
In hope to prove this loud complaint a lie.
Diſguis'd in human ſhape, I travell'd round
The world, and more than what I heard, I found.

O'er Mænalus I took my ſteepy way,
By caverns infamous for beaſts of prey:
Then croſs'd Cyllene, and the piny ſhade,
More infamous by curſt Lycaon made:
Dark night had covered heaven and earth, before
I enter'd his unhoſpitable door.
Juſt at my entrance, I diſplay'd the ſign
That ſomewhat was approaching of divine.
The proſtrate people pray; the tyrant grins;
And, adding prophanation to his ſins,
I'll try, ſaid he, and if a God appear,
To prove his deity ſhall coſt him dear.
'Twas late; the graceleſs wretch my death prepares,
When I ſhould ſoundly ſleep, oppreſt with cares:
This dire experiment he choſe, to prove
If I were mortal, or undoubted Jove:
But firſt he had reſolv'd to taſte my power:
Not long before, but in a luckleſs hour,
Some legates ſent from the Moloſſian ſtate,
Were on a peaceful errand come to treat:
Of theſe he murders one, he boils the fleſh,
And lays the mangled morſels in a diſh:
Some part he roaſts; then ſerves it up ſo dreſt,
And bids me welcome to this human feaſt.
Mov'd with diſdain, the table I o'erturn'd;
And with avenging flames the palace burn'd.
The tyrant, in a fright, for ſhelter gains
The neighbouring fields, and ſcours along the plains.
Howling he fled, and fain he would have ſpoke,
But human voice his brutal tongue forſook.

About his lips the gather'd foam he churns,
And, breathing ſlaughter, ſtill with rage he burns,
But on the bleating flock his fury turns.
His mantle, now his hide, with rugged hairs
Cleaves to his back; a famiſh'd face he bears;
His arms deſcend, his ſhoulders ſink away,
To multiply his legs for chace of prey.
He grows a wolf, his hoarineſs remains,
And the ſame rage in other members reigns.
His eyes ſtill ſparkle in a narrower ſpace,
His jaws retain the grin and violence of his face.
This was a ſingle ruin, but not one
Deſerves ſo juſt a puniſhment alone.
Mankind 's a monſter, and th' ungodly times,
Confederate into guilt, are ſworn to crimes.
All are alike involv'd in ill, and all
Muſt by the ſame relentleſs fury fall.
Thus ended he; the greater Gods aſſent,
By clamours urging his ſevere intent;
The leſs fill up the cry for puniſhment.
Yet ſtill with pity they remember man;
And mourn as much as heavenly ſpirits can.
They aſk, when thoſe were loſt of human birth,
What he would do with all his waſte of earth?
If his diſpeopled world he would reſign
To beaſts, a mute, and more ignoble line?
Neglected altars muſt no longer ſmoke,
If none were left to worſhip and invoke.
To whom the father of the Gods reply'd:
Lay that unneceſſary fear aſide:
Mine be the care new people to provide.

I will

I will from wondrous principles ordain
A race unlike the firſt, and try my ſkill again.
Already had he toſs'd the flaming brand,
And roll'd the thunder in his ſpacious hand;
Preparing to diſcharge on ſeas and land:
But ſtopt, for fear, thus violently driven,
The ſparks ſhould catch his axle-tree of heaven.
Remembering, in the Fates, a time, when fire
Should to the battlements of heaven aſpire,
And all his blazing worlds above ſhould burn,
And all th' inferior globe to cinders turn.
His dire artillery thus diſmiſs'd, he bent
His thoughts to ſome ſecurer puniſhment:
Concludes to pour a watery deluge down;
And, what he durſt not burn, reſolves to drown.
The northern breath, that freezes floods, he binds;
With all the race of cloud-diſpelling winds:
The South he loos'd, who night and horror brings;
And fogs are ſhaken from his flaggy wings.
From his divided beard two ſtreams he pours;
His head and rheumy eyes diſtil in ſhowers.
With rain his robe and heavy mantle flow:
And lazy miſts are lowering on his brow,
Still as he ſwept along, with his clench'd fiſt,
He ſqueez'd the clouds; th' impriſon'd clouds reſiſt:
The ſkies, from pole to pole, with peals reſound;
And ſhowers inlarg'd come pouring on the ground.
Then, clad in colours of a various die,
Junonian Iris breeds a new ſupply,

To feed the clouds impetuous rain deſcends;
The bearded corn beneath the burthen bends:
Defrauded clowns deplore their periſh'd grain;
And the long labours of the year are vain.
Nor from his patrimonial heaven alone
Is Jove content to pour his vengeance down:
Aid from his brother of the ſeas he craves,
To help him with auxiliary waves.
The watery tyrant calls his brooks and floods,
Who roll from moſſy caves, their moiſt abodes;
And with perpetual urns his palace fill:
To whom in brief he thus imparts his will:
Small exhortation needs; your powers employ;
And this bad world (ſo Jove requires) deſtroy.
Let looſe the reins to all your watery ſtore:
Bear down the dams, and open every door.
The floods, by nature enemies to land,
And proudly ſwelling with their new command,
Remove the living ſtones that ſtopp'd their way,
And, guſhing from their ſource, augment the ſea.
Then, with his mace, their monarch ſtruck the ground:
With inward trembling earth receiv'd the wound;
And riſing ſtreams a ready paſſage found.
Th' expanded waters gather on the plain,
They float the fields, and overtop the grain:
Then, ruſhing onwards, with a ſweepy ſway,
Bear flocks, and folds, and labouring hinds away.
Nor ſafe their dwellings were; for, ſap'd by floods,
Their houſes fell upon their houſhold Gods.

The

The ſolid piles, too ſtrongly built to fall,
High o'er their heads behold a watery wall.
Now ſeas and earth were in confuſion loſt;
A world of waters, and without a coaſt.
One climbs a cliff; one in his boat is borne,
And ploughs above, where late he ſow'd his corn.
Others o'er chimney tops and turrets row,
And drop their anchors on the meads below:
Or, downward driven, they bruiſe the tender vine;
Or, toſs'd aloft, are knock'd againſt a pine.
And where of late the kids had cropp'd the graſs,
The monſters of the deep now take their place.
Inſulting Nereids on the cities ride,
And wondering dolphins o'er the palace glide.
On leaves, and maſts of mighty oaks, they brouze;
And their broad fins entangle in the boughs.
The frighted wolf now ſwims among the ſheep;
The yellow lion wanders in the deep:
His rapid force no longer helps the boar:
The ſtag ſwims faſter than he ran before.
The fowls, long beating on their wings in vain,
Deſpair of land, and drop into the main.
Now hills and vales no more diſtinction know,
And level'd nature lies oppreſs'd below.
The moſt of mortals periſh in the flood,
The ſmall remainder dies for want of food.
A mountain of ſtupendous height there ſtands
Betwixt th' Athenian and Bœotian lands.
The bound of fruitful fields, while fields they were,
But then a field of waters did appear:

Parnaſſus is its name; whoſe forky riſe
Mounts through the clouds, and mates the lofty ſkies.
High on the ſummit of this dubious cliff,
Deucalion wafting moor'd his little ſkiff.
He with his wife were only left behind
Of periſh'd man; they two were human-kind.
The mountain-nymphs and Themis they adore,
And from her oracles relief implore.
The moſt upright of mortal men was he;
The moſt ſincere and holy woman, ſhe.
When Jupiter, ſurveying earth from high,
Beheld it in a lake of water lie,
That, where ſo many millions lately liv'd,
But two, the beſt of either ſex, ſurviv'd,
He loos'd the northern wind; fierce Boreas flies
To puff away the clouds, and purge the ſkies:
Serenely, while he blows, the vapours driven
Diſcover heaven to earth, and earth to heaven.
The billows fall, while Neptune lays his mace
On the rough ſea, and ſmooths its furrow'd face.
Already Triton, at his call, appears
Above the waves: a Tyrian robe he wears;
And in his hand a crooked trumpet bears.
The ſovereign bids him peaceful ſounds inſpire,
And give the waves the ſignal to retire.
His writhen ſhell he takes, whoſe narrow vent
Grows by degrees into a large extent;
Then gives it breath; the blaſt, with doubling ſound,
Runs the wide circuit of the world around.

The

The ſun firſt heard it, in his early Eaſt,
And met the rattling echos in the Weſt.
The waters, liſtening to the trumpet's roar,
Obey the ſummons, and forſake the ſhore.
A thin circumference of land appears;
And earth, but not at once, her viſage rears,
And peeps upon the ſeas from upper grouuds:
The ſtreams, but juſt contain'd within their bounds,
By ſlow degrees into their channels crawl;
And earth increaſes as the waters fall.
In longer time the tops of trees appear,
Which mud on their diſhonour'd branches bear.
At length the world was all reſtor'd to view,
But deſolate, and of a ſickly hue:
Nature beheld herſelf, and ſtood aghaſt,
A diſmal deſert, and a ſilent waſte.
Which when Deucalion, with a piteous look,
Beheld, he wept, and thus to Pyrrha ſpoke:
Oh wife, oh ſiſter, oh of all thy kind
The beſt and only creature left behind,
By kindred, love, and now by dangers, join'd;
Of multitudes, who breath'd the common air,
We two remain; a ſpecies in a pair:
The reſt the ſeas have ſwallow'd; nor have we
Ev'n of this wretched life a certainty.
The clouds are ſtill above; and, while I ſpeak,
A ſecond deluge o'er our heads may break.
Should I be ſnatch'd from hence, and thou remain,
Without relief, or partner of thy pain,
How could'ſt thou ſuch a wretched life ſuſtain?

Should

Should I be left, and thou be loſt, the ſea,
That bury'd her I lov'd, ſhould bury me.
Oh could our father his old arts inſpire,
And make me heir of his informing fire,
That ſo I might aboliſh'd man retrieve,
And periſh'd people in new ſouls might live!
But Heaven is pleas'd, nor ought we to complain,
That we, th' examples of mankind, remain.
He ſaid: the careful couple join their tears,
And then invoke the Gods with pious prayers.
Thus in devotion having eas'd their grief,
From ſacred oracles they ſeek relief:
And to Cephiſus' brook their way purſue:
The ſtream was troubled, but the ford they knew.
With living waters in the fountain bred,
They ſprinkle firſt their garments and their head,
Then took the way which to the temple led.
The roofs were all defil'd with moſs and mire,
The deſert altars void of ſolemn fire.
Before the gradual proſtrate they ador'd,
The pavement kiſs'd; and thus the ſaint implor'd.
O righteous Themis, if the powers above
By prayers are bent to pity, and to love;
If human miſeries can move their mind;
If yet they can forgive, and yet be kind;
Tell how we may reſtore, by ſecond birth,
Mankind, and people deſolated earth.
Then thus the gracious Goddeſs, nodding, ſaid;
Depart, and with your veſtments veil your head;

And

And ſtooping lowly down, with looſen'd zones,
Throw each behind your backs your mighty mother's bones.
Amaz'd the pair, and mute with wonder, ſtand,
Till Pyrrha firſt refus'd the dire command.
Forbid it heaven, ſaid ſhe, that I ſhould tear
Thoſe holy relics from the ſepulchre.
They ponder'd the myſterious words again,
For ſome new ſenſe; and long they ſought in vain.
At length Deucalion clear'd his cloudy brow,
And ſaid, The dark ænigma will allow
A meaning; which if well I underſtand,
From ſacrilege will free the God's command;
This earth our mighty mother is, the ſtones
In her capacious body are her bones:
Theſe we muſt caſt behind. With hope, and fear,
The woman did the new ſolution hear:
The man diffides in his own augury,
And doubts the Gods; yet both reſolve to try.
Deſcending from the mount, they firſt unbind
Their veſts, and veil'd they caſt the ſtones behind:
The ſtones (a miracle to mortal view,
But long tradition makes it paſs for true)
Did firſt the rigour of their kind expel,
And ſuppled into ſoftneſs as they fell;
Then ſwell'd, and ſwelling by degrees grew warm;
And took the rudiments of human form;
Imperfect ſhapes, in marble ſuch are ſeen,
When the rude chizzel does the man begin;
While yet the roughneſs of the ſtone remains,
Without the riſing muſcles and the veins.

The

The ſappy parts, and next reſembling juice,
Were turn'd to moiſture, for the body's uſe:
Supplying humours, blood, and nouriſhment:
The reſt, too ſolid to receive a bent,
Converts to bones; and what was once a vein,
Its former name and nature did retain.
By help of power divine, in little ſpace,
What the man threw aſſum'd a manly face;
And what the wife, renew'd the female race.
Hence we derive our nature, born to bear
Laborious life, and harden'd into care.
The reſt of animals, from teeming earth
Produc'd, in various forms receiv'd their birth.
The native moiſture, in its cloſe retreat,
Digeſted by the ſun's ætherial heat,
As in a kindly womb, began to breed:
Then ſwell'd, and quicken'd by the vital ſeed.
And ſome in leſs, and ſome in longer ſpace,
Were ripen'd into form, and took a ſeveral face.
Thus when the Nile from Pharian fields is fled,
And ſeeks with ebbing tides his ancient bed,
The fat manure with heavenly fire is warm'd;
And cruſted creatures, as in wombs, are form'd:
Theſe, when they turn the glebe, the peaſants find:
Some rude, and yet unfiniſh'd in their kind:
Short of their limbs, a lame imperfect birth;
One half alive, and one of lifeleſs earth.
For heat and moiſture when in bodies join'd,
The temper that reſults from either kind

Conception

Conception makes; and fighting, till they mix,
Their mingled atoms in each other fix.
Thus nature's hand the genial bed prepares
With friendly diſcord, and with fruitful wars.
From hence the ſurface of the ground with mud
And ſlime beſmear'd (the fæces of the flood)
Receiv'd the rays of heaven; and, ſucking in
The ſeeds of heat, new creatures did begin:
Some were of ſeveral ſorts produc'd before;
But of new monſters earth created more.
Unwillingly, but yet ſhe brought to light
Thee, Python too, the wondering world to fright,
And the new nations, with ſo dire a ſight:
So monſtrous was his bulk, ſo large a ſpace
Did his vaſt body and long train embrace:
Whom Phœbus baſking on a bank eſpy'd,
Ere now the God his arrows had not try'd,
But on the trembling deer, or mountain-goat;
At this new quarry he prepares to ſhoot.
Though every ſhaft took place, he ſpent the ſtore
Of his full quiver; and 'twas long before
Th' expiring ſerpent wallow'd in his gore.
Then, to preſerve the fame of ſuch a deed,
For Python ſlain, he Pythian games decreed,
Where noble youths for maſterſhip ſhould ſtrive,
To quoit, to run, and ſteeds and chariots drive.
The prize was fame, in witneſs of renown,
An oaken garland did the victor crown.
The laurel was not yet for triumphs born;
But every green alike by Phœbus worn
Did, with promiſcuous grace, his flowing locks adorn.

The

The TRANSFORMATION of DAPHNE into a LAUREL.

The firſt and faireſt of his loves was ſhe
Whom not blind fortune, but the dire decree
Of angry Cupid forc'd him to deſire:
Daphne her name, and Peneus was her ſire.
Swell'd with the pride that new ſucceſs attends,
He ſees the ſtripling, while his bow he bends,
And thus inſults him: Thou laſcivious boy,
Are arms like theſe for chiidren to employ?
Know, ſuch atchievements are my proper claim;
Due to my vigour and unerring aim:
Reſiſtleſs are my ſhafts; and Python late,
In ſuch a feather'd death, has found his fate.
Take up thy torch, and lay my weapons by;
With that the feeble ſouls of lovers fry.
To whom the ſon of Venus thus reply'd:
Phœbus, thy ſhafts are ſure on all beſide;
But mine on Phœbus: mine the fame ſhall be
Of all thy conqueſts, when I conquer thee.
He ſaid, and ſoaring ſwiftly wing'd his flight;
Nor ſtopt but on Parnaſſus' airy height.
Two different ſhafts he from his quiver draws;
One to repel deſire, and one to cauſe.
One ſhaft is pointed with refulgent gold,
To bribe the love, and make the lover bold:
One blunt, and tipt with lead, whoſe baſe allay
Provokes diſdain, and drives deſire away.

The

The blunted bolt againſt the nymph he dreſt:
But with the ſharp transfix'd Apollo's breaſt.
Th' enamour'd Deity purſues the chace;
The ſcornful damſel ſhuns his loath'd embrace;
In hunting beaſts of prey her youth employs;
And Phœbe rivals in her rural joys.
With naked neck ſhe goes, and ſhoulders bare,
And with a fillet binds her flowing hair.
By many ſuitors ſought, ſhe mocks their pains,
And ſtill her vow'd virginity maintains.
Impatient of a yoke, the name of bride
She ſhuns, and hates the joys ſhe never try'd.
On wilds and wood ſhe fixes her deſire:
Nor knows what youth and kindly love inſpire.
Her father chides her oft: Thou ow'ſt, ſays he,
A huſband to thyſelf, a ſon to me.
She, like a crime, abhors the nuptial bed:
She glows with bluſhes, and ſhe hangs her head.
Then, caſting round his neck her tender arms,
Soothes him with blandiſhments and filial charms:
Give me, my lord, ſhe ſaid, to live, and die,
A ſpotleſs maid, without the marriage-tie.
'Tis but a ſmall requeſt; I beg no more
Than what Diana's father gave before.
The good old ſire was ſoften'd to conſent;
But ſaid, her wiſh would prove her puniſhment:
For ſo much youth, and ſo much beauty join'd,
Oppos'd the ſtate, which her deſires deſign'd.
The God of light, aſpiring to her bed,
Hopes what he ſeeks, with flattering fancies fed;
And is by his own oracles miſled.

And

And as in empty fields the ſtubble burns,
Or nightly travellers, when day returns,
Their uſeleſs torches on dry hedges throw,
That catch the flames, and kindle all the row;
So burns the God, conſuming in deſire,
And feeding in his breaſt the fruitleſs fire:
Her well-turn'd neck he view'd (her neck was bare)
And on her ſhoulders her diſhevel'd hair:
Oh, were it comb'd, ſaid he, with what a grace
Would every waving curl become her face!
He view'd her eyes, like heavenly lamps that ſhone!
He view'd her lips, too ſweet to view alone,
Her taper fingers, and her panting breaſt;
He praiſes all he ſees, and for the reſt
Believes the beauties yet unſeen are beſt.
Swift as the wind, the damſel fled away,
Nor did for theſe alluring ſpeeches ſtay:
Stay, nymph, he cry'd, I follow, not a foe:
Thus from the Lion trips the trembling Doe;
Thus from the Wolf the frighten'd Lamb removes,
And from purſuing Falcons fearful Doves;
Thou ſhunn'ſt a God, and ſhunn'ſt a God, that loves.
Ah, leſt ſome thorn ſhould pierce thy tender foot,
Or thou ſhould'ſt fall in flying my purſuit!
To ſharp uneven ways thy ſteps decline;
Abate thy ſpeed, and I will bate of mine.
Yet think from whom thou doſt ſo raſhly fly;
Nor baſely born, nor ſhepherd's ſwain am I.
Perhaps thou know'ſt not my ſuperior ſtate;
And from that ignorance proceeds thy hate.

Me Claros, Delphos, Tenedos obey;
Theſe hands the Patareian ſceptre ſway.
The king of Gods begot me: what ſhall be,
Or is, or ever was, in fate, I ſee.
Mine is th' invention of the charming lyre;
Sweet notes and heavenly numbers I inſpire.
Sure is my bow, unerring is my dart;
But ah! more deadly his, who pierc'd my heart.
Medicine is mine, what herbs and ſimples grow
In fields and foreſts, all their powers I know;
And am the great phyſician call'd below.
Alas, that fields and foreſts can afford
No remedies to heal their love-ſick lord!
To cure the pains of love, no plant avails;
And his own phyſic the phyſician fails.
She heard not half, ſo furiouſly ſhe flies,
And on her ear th' imperfect accents dies.
Fear gave her wings; and as ſhe fled, the wind
Increaſing ſpread her flowing hair behind;
And left her legs and thighs expos'd to view;
Which made the God more eager to purſue.
The God was young, and was too hotly bent
To loſe his time in empty compliment:
But, led by love, and fir'd by ſuch a ſight,
Impetuouſly purſued his near delight.
As when th' impatient greyhound, ſlipt from far,
Bounds o'er the glebe, to courſe the fearful hare,
She in her ſpeed does all her ſafety lay;
And he with double ſpeed purſues the prey;

O'er-runs her at the ſitting turn, and licks
His chaps in vain, and blows upon the flix:
She ſcapes, and for the neighbouring covert ſtrives,
And, gaining ſhelter, doubts if yet ſhe lives:
If little things with great we may compare,
Such was the God, and ſuch the flying fair:
She, urg'd by fear, her feet did ſwiftly move;
But he more ſwiftly, who was urg'd by love.
He gathers ground upon her in the chace:
Now breathes upon her hair, with nearer pace;
And juſt is faſtening on the wiſh'd embrace.
The nymph grew pale, and in a mortal fright,
Spent with the labour of ſo long a flight;
And now deſpairing caſt a mournful look,
Upon the ſtreams of her paternal brook:
Oh, help, ſhe cry'd, in this extremeſt need,
If Water-Gods are Deities indeed:
Gape, earth, and this unhappy wretch intomb:
Or change my form whence all my ſorrows come.
Scarce had ſhe finiſh'd, when her feet ſhe found
Benumb'd with cold, and faſten'd to the ground:
A filmy rind about her body grows,
Her hair to leaves, her arms extend to boughs:
The nymph is all into a laurel gone,
The ſmoothneſs of her ſkin remains alone.
Yet Phœbus loves her ſtill, and, caſting round
Her bole, his arms, ſome little warmth he found.
The tree ſtill panted in th' unfiniſh'd part,
Not wholly vegetive, and heav'd her heart.

He

He fix'd his lips upon the trembling rind;
It ſwerv'd aſide, and his embrace declin'd.
To whom the God: Becauſe thou canſt not be
My miſtreſs, I eſpouſe thee for my tree:
Be thou the prize of honour and renown;
The deathleſs poet, and the poem, crown.
Thou ſhalt the Roman feſtivals adorn,
And, after poets, be by victors worn.
Thou ſhalt returning Cæſar's triumph grace;
When pomps ſhall in a long proceſſion paſs:
Wreath'd on the poſt before his palace wait;
And be the ſacred guardian of the gate:
Secure from thunder, and unharm'd by Jove,
Unfading as th' immortal powers above:
And as the locks of Phœbus are unſhorn,
So ſhall perpetual green thy boughs adorn.
The grateful tree was pleas'd with what he ſaid,
And ſhook the ſhady honours of her head.

The TRANSFORMATION of IO into an HEIFER.

An ancient foreſt in Theſſalia grows;
Which Tempe's pleaſant valley does incloſe;
Through this the rapid Peneus takes his courſe;
From Pindus rolling with impetuous force:
Miſts from the river's mighty fall ariſe;
And deadly damps incloſe the cloudy ſkies:
Perpetual fogs are hanging o'er the wood;
And ſounds of waters deaf the neighbourhood.

Deep, in a rocky cave, he makes abode:
A manſion proper for a mourning God.
Here he gives audience; iſſuing out decrees
To rivers, his dependent Deities.
On this occaſion hither they reſort,
To pay their homage, and to make their court,
All doubtful, whether to congratulate
His daughter's honour, or lament her fate.
Sperchæus, crown'd with poplar, firſt appears;
Then old Apidanus came crown'd with years:
Enipeus turbulent, Amphryſos tame;
And Æas laſt with lagging waters came.
Then of his kindred brooks a numerous throng
Condole his loſs, and bring their urns along.
Not one was wanting of the watery train,
That fill'd his flood, or mingled with the main,
But Inachus, who, in his cave alone,
Wept not another's loſſes, but his own;
For his dear Io, whether ſtray'd or dead,
To him uncertain, doubtful tears he ſhed.
He fought her through the world, but ſought in vain;
And, no where finding, rather fear'd her ſlain.
Her juſt returning from her father's brook,
Jove had beheld with a deſiring look;
And, oh, fair daughter of the flood, he ſaid,
Worthy alone of Jove's imperial bed,
Happy whoever ſhall thoſe charms poſſeſs!
The king of Gods (nor is thy lover leſs)
Invites thee to yon cooler ſhades, to ſhun
The ſcorching rays of the meridian ſun.

Nor

Nor ſhalt thou tempt the dangers of the grove
Alone without a guide; thy guide is Jove.
No puny power, but he, whoſe high command
Is unconfin'd, who rules the ſeas and land,
And tempers thunder in his awful hand.
Or, fly not (for ſhe fled from his embrace
O'er Lerna's paſtures): he purſued the chace
Along the ſhades of the Lyrcæan plain;
At length the God who never aſks in vain,
Involv'd with vapours, imitating night,
Both air and earth; and then ſuppreſs'd her flight,
And, mingling force with love, enjoy'd the full delight.
Mean-time the jealous Juno, from on high
Survey'd the fruitful fields of Arcady;
And wonder'd that the miſt ſhould over-run
The face of day-light, and obſcure the ſun.
No natural cauſe ſhe found, from brooks or bogs,
Or marſhy lowlands to produce the fogs:
Then round the ſkies ſhe fought for Jupiter,
Her faithleſs huſband; but no Jove was there.
Suſpecting now the worſt, Or I, ſhe ſaid,
Am much miſtaken, or am much betray'd.
With fury ſhe precipitates her flight;
Diſpels the ſhadows of diſſembled night,
And to the day reſtores his native light.
Th' almighty leacher, careful to prevent
The conſequence, foreſeeing her deſcent,
Transforms his miſtreſs in a trice: and now
In Io's place appears a lovely cow.

So sleek her skin, so faultless was her make,
Ev'n Juno did unwilling pleasure take
To see so fair a rival of her love;
And what she was, and whence, enquir'd of Jove:
Of what fair herd, and from what pedigree?
The God half-caught was forc'd upon a lie;
And said, she sprung from earth. She took the word,
And begg'd the beauteous heifer of her lord.
What should he do? 'twas equal shame to Jove,
Or to relinquish, or betray his love:
Yet to refuse so slight a gift, would be
But more t' increase his consort's jealousy:
Thus fear, and love, by turns his heart assail'd;
And stronger love had sure at length prevail'd;
But some faint hope remain'd, his jealous queen
Had not the mistress through the heifer seen.
The cautious Goddess of her gift possest,
Yet harbour'd anxious thoughts within her breast;
As she who knew the falsehood of her Jove,
And justly fear'd some new relapse of love.
Which to prevent, and to secure her care,
To trusty Argus she commits the fair.
The head of Argus (as with stars the skies)
Was compass'd round, and wore an hundred eyes.
But two by turns their lids in slumber steep;
The rest on duty still their station keep;
Nor could the total constellation sleep.
Thus, ever present, to his eyes and mind,
His charge was still before him, though behind,

In

In fields he ſuffer'd her to feed by day;
But, when the ſetting ſun to night gave way,
The captive cow he ſummon'd with a call,
And drove her back, and ty'd her to the ſtall.
On leaves of trees and bitter herbs ſhe fed,
Heaven was her canopy, bare earth her bed;
So hardly lodg'd: and to digeſt her food,
She drank from troubled ſtreams defil'd with mud.
Her woful ſtory fain ſhe would have told,
With hands upheld, but had no hands to hold,
Her head to her ungentle keeper bow'd,
She ſtrove to ſpeak; ſhe ſpoke not, but ſhe low'd.
Affrighted with the noiſe, ſhe look'd around,
And ſeem'd t' inquire the author of the ſound.
Once on the banks where often ſhe had play'd
(Her father's banks) ſhe came, and there ſurvey'd
Her alter'd viſage, and her branching head;
And ſtarting from herſelf ſhe would have fled.
Her fellow-nymphs, familiar to her eyes,
Beheld, but knew her not in this diſguiſe.
Ev'n Inachus himſelf was ignorant;
And in his daughter did his daughter want.
She follow'd where her fellows went, as ſhe
Were ſtill a partner of the company:
They ſtroke her neck; the gentle heifer ſtands,
And her neck offers to their ſtroking hands:
Her father gave her graſs; the graſs ſhe took;
And lick'd his palms, and caſt a piteous look;
And in the language of her eyes ſhe ſpoke.

She would have told her name, and aſk'd relief,
But, wanting words, in tears ſhe tells her grief.
Which with her foot ſhe makes him underſtand;
And prints the name of Io in the ſand,
Ah wretched me! her mournful father cry'd;
She with a ſigh to *wretched* me reply'd:
About her milk-white neck his arms he threw;
And wept, and then theſe tender words enſue:
And art thou ſhe, whom I have ſought around
The world, and have at length ſo ſadly found?
So found, is worſe than loſt: with mutual words
Thou anſwer'ſt not, no voice thy tongue affords:
But ſighs are deeply drawn from out thy breaſt;
And ſpeech deny'd by lowing is expreſs'd.
Unknowing, I prepar'd thy bridal bed;
With empty hopes of happy iſſue fed.
But now the huſband of a herd muſt be
Thy mate, and bellowing ſons thy progeny.
Oh, were I mortal, death might bring relief!
But now my God-head but extends my grief;
Prolongs my woes, of which no end I ſee,
And makes me curſe my immortality.
More had he ſaid, but, fearful of her ſtay,
The ſtarry guardian drove his charge away
To ſome freſh paſture; on a hilly height
He ſate himſelf, and kept her ſtill in ſight.

The

The Eyes of Argus transformed into Peacock's Train.

Now Jove no longer could her ſufferings bear:
But call'd in haſte his airy meſſenger,
The ſon of Maïa, with ſevere decree
To kill the keeper, and to ſet her free.
With all his harneſs ſoon the God was ſped;
His flying hat was faſten'd on his head;
Wings on his heels were hung, and in his hand
He holds the virtue of the ſnaky wand.
The liquid air his moving pinions wound,
And, in the moment, ſhoot him on the ground.
Before he came in ſight, the crafty God
His wings diſmiſs'd, but ſtill retain'd his rod:
That ſleep-procuring wand wiſe Hermes took,
But made it ſeem to ſight a ſhepherd's hook.
With this he did a herd of goats control;
Which by the way he met, and ſlily ſtole.
Clad like a country ſwain, he pip'd, and ſung;
And playing drove his jolly troop along.
With pleaſure Argus the muſician heeds;
But wonders much at thoſe new vocal reeds.
And whoſo'er thou art, my friend, ſaid he,
Up hither drive thy goats, and play by me:
This hill has brouze for them, and ſhade for thee.
The God, who was with eaſe induc'd to climb,
Began diſcourſe to paſs away the time;
And ſtill betwixt his tuneful pipe he plies:
And watch'd his hour, to cloſe the keeper's eyes.

With much ado, he partly kept awake;
Not ſuffering all his eyes repoſe to take:
And aſk'd the ſtranger, who did reeds invent,
And whence began ſo rare an inſtrument.

The TRANSFORMATION of SYRINX into REEDS.

Then Hermes thus; a nymph of late there was,
Whoſe heavenly form her fellows did ſurpaſs.
The pride and joy of fair Arcadia's plains;
Belov'd by Deities, ador'd by ſwains:
Syrinx her name, by Sylvans oft purſued,
As oft ſhe did the luſtful Gods delude:
The rural and the wood-land powers diſdain'd;
With Cynthia hunted, and her rites maintain'd;
Like Phœbe clad, ev'n Phœbe's ſelf ſhe ſeems,
So tall, ſo ſtraight, ſuch well-proportion'd limbs:
The niceſt eye did no diſtinction know,
But that the Goddeſs bore a golden bow:
Diſtinguiſh'd thus, the ſight ſhe cheated too.
Deſcending from Lycæus, Pan admires
The matchleſs nymph, and burns with new deſires.
A crown of pine upon his head he wore;
And thus began her pity to implore.
But, ere he thus began, ſhe took her flight
So ſwift, ſhe was already out of ſight.
Nor ſtay'd to hear the courtſhip of the God;
But bent her courſe to Ladon's gentle flood:
There by the river ſtopt, and tir'd before,
Relief from water-nymphs her prayers implore.

Now while the luſtful God, with ſpeedy pace,
Juſt thought to ſtrain her in a ſtrict embrace,
He fills his arms with reeds, new riſing on the place.
And while he ſighs his ill ſucceſs to find,
The tender canes were ſhaken by the wind;
And breath'd a mournful air, unheard before;
That, much ſurprizing Pan, yet pleas'd him more.
Admiring this new muſic, Thou, he ſaid,
Who canſt not be the partner of my bed,
At leaſt ſhalt be the conſort of my mind;
And often, often, to my lips be join'd.
He form'd the reeds, proportion'd as they are:
Unequal in their length, and wax'd with care,
They ſtill retain the name of his ungrateful fair.
While Hermes pip'd, and ſung, and told his tale,
The keeper's winking eyes began to fail,
And drowſy ſlumber on the lids to creep;
Till all the watchman was at length aſleep.
Then ſoon the God his voice and ſong ſuppreſt;
And with his powerful rod confirm'd his reſt:
Without delay his crooked falchion drew,
And at one fatal ſtroke the keeper ſlew.
Down from the rock fell the diſſever'd head,
Opening its eyes in death, and falling bled;
And mark'd the paſſage with a crimſon trail:
Thus Argus lies in pieces, cold and pale;
And all his hundred eyes, with all their light,
Are clos'd at once, in one perpetual night.
Theſe Juno takes, that they no more may fail,
And ſpreads them in her peacock's gaudy tail.

Impatient

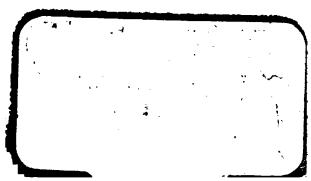
Impatient to revenge her injur'd bed,
She wreaks her anger on her rival's head;
With furies frights her from her native home,
And drives her gadding round the world to roam:
Nor ceas'd her madneſs and her flight, before
She touch'd the limits of the Pharian ſhore.
At length, arriving on the banks of Nile,
Wearied with length of ways, and worn with toil,
She laid her down: and, leaning on her knees,
Invok'd the cauſe of all her miſeries:
And caſt her languiſhing regards above,
For help from heaven, and her ungrateful Jove.
She ſigh'd, ſhe wept, ſhe low'd; 'twas all ſhe could;
And with unkindneſs ſeem'd to tax the God.
Laſt, with an humble prayer, ſhe begg'd repoſe,
Or death at leaſt to finiſh all her woes.
Jove heard her vows, and, with a flattering look,
In her behalf to jealous Juno ſpoke.
He caſt his arms about her neck, and ſaid:
Dame, reſt ſecure; no more thy nuptial bed
This nymph ſhall violate; by Styx I ſwear,
And every oath that binds the Thunderer.
The Goddeſs was appeas'd: and at the word
Was Io to her former ſhape reſtor'd.
The rugged hair began to fall away;
The ſweetneſs of her eyes did only ſtay,
Though not ſo large; her crooked horns decreaſe;
The wideneſs of her jaws and noſtrils ceaſe:
Her hoofs to hands return, in little ſpace;
The five long taper fingers take their place;

And

And nothing of the heifer now is ſeen,
Beſide the native whiteneſs of her ſkin.
Erected on her feet ſhe walks again,
And two the duty of the four ſuſtain.
She tries her tongue, her ſilence ſoftly breaks,
And fears her former lowings when ſhe ſpeaks:
A Goddeſs now through all th' Egyptian ſtate;
And ſerv'd by prieſts, who in white linen wait.
Her ſon was Epaphus, at length believ'd
The ſon of Jove, and as a God receiv'd.
With ſacrifice ador'd, and public prayers,
He common temples with his mother ſhares.
Equal in years, and rival in renown
With Epaphus, the youthful Phaëton,
Like honour claims, and boaſts his ſire the ſun.
His haughty looks, and his aſſuming air,
The ſon of Iſis could no longer bear:
Thou tak'ſt thy mother's word too far, ſaid he,
And haſt uſurp'd thy boaſted pedigree.
Go, baſe pretender to a borrow'd name!
Thus tax'd, he bluſh'd with anger, and with ſhame;
But ſhame repreſs'd his rage: the daunted youth
Soon ſeeks his mother, and enquires the truth:
Mother, ſaid he, this infamy was thrown
By Epaphus on you, and me your ſon.
He ſpoke in public, told it to my face;
Nor durſt I vindicate the dire diſgrace:
Ev'n I, the bold, the ſenſible of wrong,
Reſtrain'd by ſhame, was forc'd to hold my tongue.
To hear an open ſlander, is a curſe:
But not to find an anſwer, is a worſe.

If

The Silver Age - - - 302
The Brazen Age - - - ibid.
The Iron Age - - - 303
The Giant's War - - 304
The Transformation of Daphne into a Laurel 318
The Transformation of Io into an Heifer 323
The Eyes of Argos transformed into a Peacock's Train - - - 329
The Transformation of Syrinx into Reeds - 330

END OF VOL. III.

NOV 24 1928